HISTORY'S GREATEST LIARS

A study of biased misinterpretations, omissions, and outright lies that have been chronicled by many of history's prominent writers

by Joseph McCabe

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HISTORY

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Joseph McCabe

1867-1955

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INTRODUCTION

by

MADALYN O'HAIR

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Contents

Introduction ____ iii
Foreword ____ 1
The False Dawn of Civilization ____ 5
History of the Hebrews ____ 9
The Christian Synthesis ____ 13
The Early Church ____ 17
The Fall of Rome ____ 21
The Dark Age ____ 25
The Greek Empire ____ 29
The Work of Gregory the Great ____ 31
The Work of Charlemagne ____ 33
Charlemagne and the Papal States ____ 37
Learning in the Dark Age ____ 39
Gerbert: Pope Sylvester II ____ 43
The Ottonian Renaissance ____ 45
Hildebrand: Gregory VII ____ 47
The Plague of Monks ____ 51
The Crusades ____ 55
The Age of Chivalry ____ 59
The Guilds ____ 67
The Recovery of Europe ____ 69
Causes of the Recovery ____ 73
The Influence of the Arabs ____ 77
The Thirteenth Century ____ 81
The Albigensian Massacre ____ 85
The Fourth Crusade ____ 89
Pope Innocent III and Frederic II ____ 93
The Inquisition ____ 97
The Founding of the Universities ____ 103
The Inspiration of Art ____ 107
The Corruption of the Friars ____ 111
The Trial of the Templars and the Pope ____ 115
The Avignon Popes ____ 119
The Great Schism ____ 123
The Council of Constance ____ 127
The Renaissance ____ 131

The Humanists 139
The Renaissance Popes 141
The Reformation 149
The Counter-Reformation 155
The Council of Trent 161
The Jesuits 163
The Thirty Years' War 167
The Massacre of St. Bartholomew 172

Introduction

At a time when the school books of the nation are under attack by right-wing religious fundamentalists, this small book of Joseph McCabe's becomes critically important. McCabe was a scholar of the old school of original objective research. He combed through the voluminous tomes of his day to seek out the inaccuracies and the errancies which he knew existed, because his own church had educated him well in how to rewrite history. He could recognize and point out the fallacies, the distortions, the deliberate lies and deceits. In addition, from his own independent research, after having been freed from the intellectual strictures which the church had imposed upon him, he was able to weigh the material at hand.

The sophisticated techniques of translation, archeological research and decipherment were not at hand for McCabe. It is, therefore, surprising how encompassing was his vision. The scholarly details which now fill the gaps for us do so within the large frame of reference from which McCabe took his view. History has been rewritten, reinterpreted, constrained within the confines of viewpoints which will benefit and enlarge the aggrandized position which religion claims for itself.

With this small handbook as a guide, any amateur historian can start to take an educated look at what is offered to us today in place of history and immediately uncover the fraudulent posits which are so apparent when once we have a guiding light. The scholarly historian can now peel back the layers of religious accretion and find some small, true, semblance of truth — what might have really happened.

Our political and cultural institutions are built on lies. This is the flaw which keeps them from servicing the human community in such a way that there might someday, in reality, be "the greatest good for the greatest number." The lies stretch back into history. They are apparent in our current evaluation of what has been taught to be history. They are in what our children read today.

The *raison d'etre* of American Atheists is to educate: to sort out fact from fiction, truth from fantasy. But, again and again we are faced with a job which is overwhelming. How does one deprogram an entire nation, a group of nations, the world? How does one dig out from the myriads of

lies that which has some semblance of reality? When religious fanatics have systematically for hundreds of years perverted the truth, from whence can come a viable and accurate record?

Joseph McCabe spent decades reading and writing, endlessly correcting, commenting, exploring, revealing, and evaluating. It is a tribute to his in-depth knowledge that he can, in such a small handbook as this, reveal so much in a generic fashion. Once we know the big picture, we can fill in the details. McCabe was a tireless fighter against the church of his youth. This ex-priest of the Roman Catholic church carried with him out of that church not bitterness and despair, but a resolution that he would expose the chicanery and deceit it practiced. It will be obvious to you, as you read this handbook, that he has done his job well.

Madalyn Murray O'Hair

Foreword

There have been four principal stages in the writing of history as a description and explanation of man's stumbling progress through the ages. First was the theological model; the human puppets played their antics on the stage because a super-human being pulled the strings from the blue canopy above. In the eighteenth century thoughtful folk concluded that man's floundering in the mud and blood were better ascribed to his kings, statesmen, and leaders of armies, so history became a glittering pageant of crowned nonentities, silk-clad bishops and nobles, scheming political adventurers, and battlefields with embroidered banners and consecrated savagery.

The nineteenth century invited science to discover some sense in the kaleidoscopic changes. Some thought that the dynamic of it all was the economic factor or the distribution of wealth, but the general inclination was, in the Darwinian vein, to seek clues in the environment. The twentieth century, the era of democracy and psychology, declared that the life of the common man must receive more attention than the glamor of palaces and the glory of battles, and that a study of the group-mind or collective psychology is the best guide. This is, in theory, the new history, and it promised us revolutionary changes.

My friends Professor Robinson and Professor Shotwell, who are counted pioneers of the new science, did not foresee that in its name a group of professors would take us back nearer to the medieval than onward to the scientific outlook. Within the space of some fifteen years (1927-42) almost as many ponderous manuals of the history of civilization or of European civilization, for the most part sumptuously illustrated, appeared on the bookstalls. These weighty volumes, bristling with dates and uncouth names, rebuked the pessimists who were saying that in frivolous modern America few read serious books; and instead of reflecting an isolationist attitude they seemed to show that hundreds of thousands thirst for a complete understanding of Europe from the time when the snow carpet of the Ice Age was rolled up and the stage prepared for the human comedy.

But the student of history was puzzled. These books were almost as rich in names and antics of kings, in battles and intrigues, as the old

history had been; and they did not conspicuously employ the processes of modern psychology. What was most obviously new in them, when you compared them with nineteenth-century history, was that they suppressed immense masses of facts that were distasteful to the Roman Catholic Welfare bosses at Washington and Boston, and were thus able to present a version of European history which must have given those gentlemen great pleasure. They buried such ancient and rustic bogies as the Fall of Rome, the Barbaric Invasions, the Dark Age, the Dissolute Monks and the Wicked Popes. They gave us more agreeable features of the "collective mind" in each age and dismissed the collective morals as irrelevant. And the part played by the Church in the development of European civilization was portrayed with a delicacy of feeling that would do credit to a nun speaking on the Roman Catholic radio.

How, in order to accomplish this, they had not only suppressed historical facts of vital social importance but admitted a large number of Roman Catholic lies about the facts, I propose to show. There are refined non-Roman Catholics who will find the word "lies" distasteful. Naturally, no one accuses an American university professor of lying. But it is clear that no historian who covers the whole history of the race, or even the history of Europe, can possibly have made a personal study of more than a few stages or phases of it. Over the greater part of his field he must borrow. Now there are more liars in the field of history, wherever it bears upon the social claims of the clergy, even than in politics, and what we complain is that our historians have culpably, on many points, admitted the fabrications and contortions of these writers. Their works do convey to the general reader and the student a good deal of the really new scientific history, but in regard to one of its most important uses, the indication of the genuine constructive factors, they give us a comprehensively false picture. So I here examine their work at forty vital stages — as many as my limited space permits — in the evolution of European civilization.

To some it may seem bold for an amateur historian to make the drastic criticism I do of a score of professional historians, but my readers will understand. While, as I said, a writer who covers 2,000, perhaps 6,000, years of history is not expected to have studied closely more than certain parts of it, I have, in my work, confined myself to one aspect of it: the recognition of the forces which have promoted or hindered progress. Professor Shotwell once invited me to cooperate in making a large series of translations of European sources of history — the scheme was later mutilated and my help not required — and asked me to name other possible collaborators on the British side. When I

maliciously named Hilaire Belloc, he said impatiently, "We in America regard you as a historian, McCabe, but do not mention Belloc." I am not a historian in the academic sense, for atleast half the materials in these manuals has no interest for me. But I am expert on such passages of history as I discuss in a hundred works of history and biography, having consulted the contemporary documents (Greek, Latin, German, French and Italian) as well as the most authoritative modern experts on each. On these points our historians have preferred the Bellocs of America and Germany. With what pitiful result I will proceed to tell.

It will save a good deal of repetition in the text and permit me, as usual, to avoid learned-looking footnotes if I give here a list of the chief works which I criticize. Most influential of them, probably, are *The Middle Ages* (2 vols., 1931) and two specialist works by Professor J. W. Thompson (of Chicago University) and *An Encyclopedia of World History* (1940 — not an encyclopedia but a condensed history) by Professor W. L. Langer (of Harvard University). Clearly influenced by these are Professor H. S. Lucas's *Short History of Civilization* (1943), Professor J. Geise's *Western World* (2 vols., 1940). Professor C. Perkin's *Man's Advancing Civilization* (1934), Professors Boak, Slosson, and Anderson's *World History* (1942, edited by Professor Langer), Professors W. Sheppard and Godfrey's *Survey of Civilization* (2 vols., 1939), Dr. Will Durant's *Story of Civilization* (1939), Professors Wallbank and Taylor's *Civilization Past and Present* (1942), Professor Harry Elmer Barnes's *History of Western Civilization* (2 vols., 1937), and Professor Lynn Thorndike's *Short History of Europe* (1928). Professor Barnes's valuable work ought not, perhaps, to be classed with the others as "new history," and certainly he will not be suspected of bending the knee to Rome when he describes me (II. 676) as "one of the most learned men of our age." That must have soured as much sanctuary wine as the late Mowry Saben's casual reference in an article in *The Argonaut* last summer to "our deeper thinkers like Einstein and McCabe." There may be other works that have not reached me on this side of the Atlantic, but these sufficiently represent the version of European history that has been imposed upon the public and our high schools and colleges during the last quarter of a century.

I
The False Dawn of Real Civilization

Since, a quarter of a century ago, I wrote the historical volumes of my *Key to Culture*, which are a conventional summary of our historical knowledge, I have in all my writing on history pursued a definite and practical policy. Following no "school," I have just selected and closely studied those developments which enable the reader to decide which ideas or institutions genuinely helped the race in its slow and painful climb to the modest level of modern civilization; and in this I have never given any fact of significance that is disputed in the historical world without quoting contemporary authority.

In the pursuit of this policy I showed that after some 3,000 years of sluggish flow the stream of human life began in the sixth century B.C. to display the premonitory signs of a faster pace both in Europe and Asia. In the course of the next seven or eight centuries the race came nearer to the basic ideas of our modern civilization than it had done in the whole of the preceding 3,000 years. Six civilizations, connected by a splendid network of shipping, stimulating each other, lined the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and pooled their culture and experience, so that when the Romans found themselves under their so-called Stoic emperors (A.D. 96-183) they, in the words of Gibbon which most authorities endorse, entered upon "that period in the history of the world during which the human race was most happy and prosperous." Professors Wallbank and Taylor say of this period (p. 165):

> Never before had the people of the Western World enjoyed such peace and such advancement. Never before in the history of the world had such a large part of Europe, Asia, and Africa been so prosperous, contented, and well governed.

But, while they admit that the chief author of this, as far as one man could be, the Epicurean Emperor Hadrian, was "the ablest of Roman emperors," they ascribe the beneficent advance to Stoicism, which was adopted only by the last of the four "Stoic" emperors and by a few of his collaborators.

Most of our new historians do not seem to have heard of this fine practical outcome of the sifting of the older traditions and the accep-

tance by the monarchs of the best ideas of the Greeks. They tell the story of Greece (apart from art) and of Rome so inadequately that the pious reader will be confirmed in his pathetic belief that the ancient world continued to be in "darkness and the shadow of death" until the Christian religion invaded it and lifted its face to the heavens. And this is because they almost completely suppress the cultural development in the Greek world that led to the great constructive work of the Roman empire at this date. They repeat at length the familiar appreciation of Plato's spiritual philosophy and Aristotle's metaphysical verbiage; and we must assume that they are unaware that, according to all experts on the subject, neither man had any appreciable influence in the Greek-Roman world. But of the thinkers whose ideas were generally adopted after 200 B.C. and bore such splendid fruit — ideas which, fully developed, are fundamental in the greater life of today — they say little or nothing.

In my recent book, *The Origin and Meaning of Ideas*, I clearly formulated these ideas. To repeat them for the convenience of the reader they are: the independent scientific investigation of reality, the vastness of the universe, evolution, progress, a humanist ethic, and the brotherhood of men. They culminated in the philosophy of Epicurus, the ethic of Zeno, and the science of Alexandria. It is a large part of our reasons for speaking of a Dark Age that all the works in which these ideas were expounded, except the famous poem of Lucretius, were destroyed by the early Christians, and the ideas were lost to the race for 1,500 years. Yet in ridiculing the European historians who talk of the Dark Age, the new historians never notice this important point. Professor Langer repeats the libel that "Epicurus endeavored to satisfy the questions (about life) by his doctrine of leisure" (p. 174). Zeno is more honored, though briefly described as the founder of the austere Stoic ethic, which shocks such of our modern puritans as really knock it; but no one mentions that both Zeno and Epicurus were dogmatic Materialists, or that it was a blend of their teachings that guided the Roman Empire at its best. In view of the live controversy of today as to the inspiration or lack of inspiration of materialism, there is no excuse for obscuring or concealing this important lesson of history.

Professor Lucas (p. 233) confirms our suspicion that the great defect of the new history at this stage is due to a timid consideration of religious claims when he says: "Belief in a supreme being provides a basis for human action, transforming it and thus altering culture and creating civilization."

That is a purely theological doctrine, and it is contradicted by the facts

of history, so the new historians at this stage present the facts in a manner which is in painful contrast to their excellent accounts of the early development of Greece and Rome, which has no social lesson for us. While the ethical and scientific development of the Ionian-Epicurian school is barely noticed, the contribution of the Jews and Persians, devout believers in a personal god, is magnified and misrepresented. The Persian religion is attributed in the conventional way to Zarathustra, whereas modern experts on it show that, whether or not there ever was such a person, which is disputed, the religion as we find it in the Persian sacred book is a growth of centuries after his time. But our chief criticism here is that these historians who insist that it is our indebtedness to the ancient world that should induce us to study it, never call attention to the fact that the two most conspicuous contributions of the Persian religion are the personality of Satan (Angra Mainyu) and the idea that since he created matter there is something inherently evil in sex. Must we thank god or Zarathustra for the way in which the world has been tortured ever since by ascetic rules and mythical devils?

II
History of The Hebrews

Still more unfortunate is the large and respectable space that is given to the story of the Hebrews. Two generations of scholars, including liberal Jewish and Christian scholars, have dug out something like a real history of the Hebrews from that tissue of facts and forgeries which we call the Old Testament. The new history serves up a pitiful compromise between this and the discredited legend of the orthodox Jews and the Roman Catholics.

If we follow the accepted canons of history, all that we know is that somewhere about 1200 B.C. fresh Semitic tribes began, in successive waves, not as one people, to come over the Jordan from the desert. Egyptologists find no ground to believe that any of them were ever in Egypt, and the best that historians can say for their own version of their life in Palestine before the year 800 B.C. is that it may, or probably does, contain trivial traditions which, of course, we cannot check. It seems clear that one group of them brought into Palestine a petty mountain-god named Jahveh which, at some time or other, the whole people accepted. But if we are to draw any conclusion from their prophetical books they adopted, when they settled down and traded with their neighbors, the phallic cults and sacred prostitution (of both sexes) of the glamorous cities of the plain continued to follow them until at least the seventh century (B.C.)

Yet, discovering in the mythical account of the Hebrews those religious-ethical lessons which they fail to see in the Greek-Roman history, the new historians — especially Will Durant in his *Story of Civilization* (1939) — discuss the heroism and monotheism of Moses, the organization of the cult of Jahveh in the desert, the antics of Saul and David, and the magnificence of Solomon, with all the credulity of Sunday School teachers. With all their "it was said" and "it was believed" most of them endorse the fantastic historical books of the Old Testament. When they come to the prophecies they seem to be on firmer ground, for the biblical religious critics regard these as the earliest authentic books.

But particularly in regard to the earliest prophets, Amos, Hosea, and Micah, a critical historian sees serious difficulties. By the ninth century the advance in trade and wealth had brought about the customary

conflict of rich and poor. Amos and Hosea, who would today be called "Red agitators" but in the new history are inspired prophets of monotheistic morality, were the coarse-mouthed spokesmen of the peasantry. Who wrote their fiery invectives against the rich and their "whoredoms"? There was no stenography in those days, and in no civilization, least of all in semibarbaric Israel, were the peasants and workers educated. Did the merchants of Jerusalem, upon whose daughters the prophets implored Jahveh to send a pox, employ their clerks . . .?

Most of us take only a mild interest in the evolution of religion, but the way in which the new history ignores the new history of the Hebrews and so treats it as to confirm the orthodox idea is as bad as their representation of the Greek-Roman social culture. Professor Langer says (p. 20):

> Through Moses Jehovah became the God of Israel after the deliverance from Egyptian bondage. . . . By declaring that Jehovah was an international God of justice Amos found the way to the recognition of Jehovah as the only God in existence.

We had thought that Moses was dead, and that the melodramatic legend of the escape from Egypt is now only an excuse for a Jewish holiday once a year. We thought that monotheism had been established by law in Egypt several centuries before Amos and was found still earlier in the *Maxims of Ptah-Hotep*. We read in the Babylonian Code, which embodies a code 1,000 years older than the mythical Moses, an application of social justice that is superior to the Hebrew copy of it. As to recognizing an *international* god of justice in Amos' railing at the rich, the learned professor seems to us to improve upon the preachers of some less-educated sect — or that he has never read Amos.

The plain truth is that our historians here obviously write under the pressure of conventional religious belief that the Hebrews educated the world instead of slowly and gradually learning the ideals of civilization from the surrounding nations. After Micah, the moral tone of the prophets improves. Jerusalem has drawn closer to Egypt. At length the Hebrews are deported to Babylon, and their education proceeds rapidly. Their priests and scribes see the wealth and power that a priesthood can acquire, and in their later years among the great pyramid-temples and on their return to Judea they organize the cult of Jahvah and set it in that mendacious framework of forged history which you call the Old Testament.

Our professors do not find the further religious development in this book so they ignore it; and in this, as in their scurvy treatment of the Epicurean school, they seriously falsify social history. At Babylon the Jews came into contact with the Persian religion. In the next few centuries ascetic cults spread among them, while some of their leaders, like Hillel, toned down the harshness of the national religion and expressed moral sentiments like those of Jesus in the Gospels.

But the Essenes deserve closer attention. Under the influence of the Persian religion they believed that the end of the world and a general judgment of men, which figure prominently in the Persian Avesta, were close at hand. Like the Zoroastrians they regarded sex as so vile that they never married, and they practiced voluntary poverty and held all things in common. Most of them "quit the world" and lived in monasteries, but some wandered from city to city healing the sick and exhorting all men to "flee from the wrath to come." Does all this — it is all told by the Jewish historian Josephus (*Jewish War*, Bk. II, Ch. VIII, 2-14), — sound familiar and intriguing? Yet not one of the new historians says a word about Hillel or the Essenes, so Jesus pops suddenly onto their pages like an angel from heaven.

III
The Christian Synthesis

In one of my early works, *The Sources of Morality in the Gospels* (1914), which is now out of print, I quote every single sentiment that is attributed to Jesus in the Gospels, and in parallel columns I give an exact moral equivalent to each from Jewish and pagan writers. I make it clear that there is not one original or unique moral sentiment, not even an ascetic course, among them. You may or may not conclude from this that the Gospel-story is just a synthesis of what were considered to be the best moral sentiments of the age put into the mouth of a prophet who might or might not be historical, but at least you will agree that if any historian chooses to speak about Jesus he must take this fact into account. Professor Barnes wisely avoids any discussion of Jesus, and Professor Thorndike observes that the Christian teaching was "by no means entirely new or strange" (p. 95); though he surprises us when he speaks of "the remarkable personality of its founder, sketched so vividly in the Gospels." Of biographical material, apart from words, there are only about about 100 verses in the four gospels, and the vague and shadowy character of Jesus in these has often been noticed. More strangely still Professor Thorndike says:

> In the Gospels Jesus often addresses Peter as the leader among the apostles and in one passage says, "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church."

"Peter and "rock" are the same in Aramaean, Greek, and Latin, and that most improbable (in the mouth of Jesus) pun on the words is a notorious late interpolation by Roman priests in the Gospel. There is, in fact, no word for "church" in Aramaean, and the idea of it as an institution belongs to a later date.

Professor Thorndike tells us that one of the attractions of the new church to the poorer Greeks and Romans was that the Christians held all things in common. This is said only of one small community, and in a book (Acts) of, at its best, very unequal value. Paul makes it clear that there was no such thing as equality in Corinth or Rome. But Professor Langer goes furthest when he says that Jesus had a "unique" personal-

ity, that he was crucified, and that even the resurrection is a "marvellous event related in each of the four gospels." It is as clearly a late addition to Mark, the earliest gospel, as a trailer is to an automobile, as theologians have pointed out for half a century. Nor does Professor Langer improve matters by adding that these gospels "came into existence within about a generation after the Crucifixion." Mark alone could plausibly be claimed as such without its resurrection-appendix. Critical theologians put Luke some time after A.D. 80, and Matthew after A.D. 85.

Professors Boak, Slosson, and Anderson say that Jesus "introduces a new doctrine which is the core of Christianity . . . the belief in the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of men." The doctrine of the brotherhood of men is, as I said, just the sentiment which Professor Thorndike quotes as not original but already widely recognized in the Greek-Roman world. It was precisely this point on which the Stoics and the Epicureans agreed and as such was the inspiration of the fine social legislation of the first century and the early part of the second. Professor Boak, who (like the others) ignores this social legislation, might, if his attention were called to it, say, "Yes, but the Christian idea of the brotherhood was founded upon the fatherhood of God." Does he prefer the fruits of the doctrine of brotherhood in the Middle Ages, or even in later times, to the great work it effected under Antonine Emperors? And if he pleads that whether some of us believe it or not, the fatherhood of god was a great and original conception, he might be reminded that Jupiter, as every Roman knew, means "Father in the Sky." The Greek Zeus is short for the same, and the Aryans who invaded India gave their supreme god the same title. It was the chief idea of the Egyptian "Hymn to Aten" about 1300 B.C.; it is finely expressed in the "Hymn to Zeus" of the Stoic Cleanthes about 250 B.C.; it was preached by the Brahmans in the seventh century B.C. (Professor Hopkins, *Religions of India*, p. 150), and so on.

But, say our professors, we must not allow theology to invade our history; which is just what they do. That Jesus was a unique prophet of great originality, that he was crucified and resurrected, and that he built a church and appointed Peter to run it is theology. That the Gospels are reliable witnesses to all this is theology. But in one or other degree it goes into the new history. When some of us apply historical principles to all this we are excluded from the august circle. We are talking theology. And it is not even theology in combination with a knowledge of history that they impose upon their readers as profane history. "No real biography of Jesus has ever been written," says Dean Inge in his

Christian Ethics and Modern Problems (1930, p. 43). "The facts necessary for a life of Jesus in the objective or historical sense simply do not exist," says Professor Wenley (Episcopalian) in his *Modern Thought and the Crises of Belief* (p. 163). An entire literature has been written on the late date and biographical unreliability of the Gospels which our historians quote so trustfully.

IV
The Early Church

The general thoughtful public understand that when authoritative writers promise them a new history it will, whether it is to be social or psychological, suppress no facts which throw light on constructive agencies and will not give seriously-disputed statements as history or use documents whose reliability is seriously challenged. So far, we have been disappointed, and we shall find the same defects at critical stages in the whole of the Christian Era. Just at this point where truth and candor in history are most valuable to us, because we are anxious to valuate accurately an institution that still functions among us, we get much untruth and little candor on vital points. Do you expect me, a professor may ask, to include those ugly pages, however authentic they are, that McCabe gives? Certainly we do; or else to warn the reader that you are omitting facts and developments that are not consistent with conventional opinions. Professor Barnes generally shows how at this stage it is possible to write history without theology.

From a purely social angle we have to settle the value of our churches, as institutions, in terms of hard fact. They claim, and numbers of distinguished men who impress the public as philosophers, literary men, even men of science, repeat the claim that in the past the churches created, or had a large part in creating, the civilization we enjoy. It is, therefore, the plain duty of the historian to give the evidence in equal proportion "for" and "against." Not one of them now does this, and the majority go so far as to endorse the claims of the clergy while suppressing the facts of history which disprove them. Professor Lucas says:

> Aside from being the repository of ancient culture and the transmitting of the literature and learning of antiquity, the Church in the Middle Ages was the teacher of Europe and the mother of the arts (XXI).
>
> The Roman Catholic Church became the parent of culture, philosophy, theology, art, literature, and learning flourished under its protective wing (238).

Professor Perkins says that "Christianity was the greatest single influence for good in European history," and Professor Boak asks:

> What did the clergy do in return for all their powers and privileges? It would be hard to say what they did not do. The church was, for some centuries, almost the only patron of art, science, philosophy, education, and the relief of the poor.

Of the large and careful literature in which these claims have been repeatedly refuted in every language of Europe they never say a word. One wonders that the Pope has not made some of them Counts of the Roman Empire: a title that costs only about $100,000.

The first point in this policy, after the statements about the originality of the Christian ethic is, by concealing facts, to allow the claim that the early Christians won the pagans by virtue of their lives, as a body, and the heroism of their endurance of torture. Although Paul paints a dark picture of the morals of the Corinthians, and we find them fraternally scolded by the Romans in the last decade of the first century, I have always admitted that until the second half of the second century the Christian communities were, on the whole, virtuous. Naturally; they still expected the end of the world, as foretold by Jesus, and the dread flames. About the beginning of the third century Bishop Hippolytus gives us a priceless description of the Roman community and the further demoralization of it by Pope Callistus. From that time onward, whatever virtuous individuals you may find described in authentic literature (not spurious Acts of the Martyrs), the average standard of character in the churches was low. I have repeatedly shown this from the consistent declarations of their leaders — Hippolytus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Eusebius, Optatus, Jerome, Augustine, Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, etc. — in all parts of the Christian world for the third, fourth and fifth centuries; and I quote only general characterizations, not indictments of individuals.

The way in which our historians suppress or obscure the facts and convey the impression that the traditional idea of virtue of the early Christian as a body is correct is best seen in what they say about the martyrs. It is true that most of them do not repeat the old fable that *seven* times the scythe of the imperial prosecutor went bodily through the entire Christian body. It is today too well established even in ecclesiastical history that there were only two general persecutions. But most of the new historians still draw upon forged Acts of the Martyrs to prove their heroism and to confirm the legend that the blood

of the martyrs was the seed of the Christians. They do not mention even the Roman Catholic literature, such as the works of the Jesuit Delehaye, in which this martyr-literature is shown to be comprehensively spurious, and the number of known martyrs is reduced from tens of thousands to a few hundred, while ninety-nine percent of the Christians apostatized or fled. None of their readers will suspect that a Roman Catholic writer (later Bishop) on the first Decian persecution, J. A. F. Greff (*The Decian Persecution*, 1897) found that only six Christians out of many thousands at Rome — only four out of fifty priests and one hundred minor clerics — suffered death for the faith. In regard to the second and greatest persecution, under Diocletian, the leading Roman Catholic historian of recent times, Msgr. Duchesne, finds only a score of proved cases of martyrs in the entire empire, and the Jesuit expert finds none at Rome; and the fourth century father of Church history, Eusebius, freely admits that the overwhelming majority — our historians claim that there were 10,000,000 Christians — shamelessly apostatized.

One does not expect historians to point out, however much they profess to apply psychology in the new history, that a Christian believed that a martyr's death — and all the lingering and picturesque forms of torturing in the lives of the martyrs are fictitious — was rewarded with eternal bliss, so that the apostasy of ninety-nine or more percent of them actually raises the question of character. But it is easy enough to mention martyrs in the early church, yet take into account at least this critical Roman Catholic literature on the subject. We should expect them also to mention the particular misdeeds on the part of the Christians which stung the two persecuting emperors. Decius was moved by the fact that a Christian bandit had murdered an emperor and usurped the purple. Diocletian had had to suppress a lot of Christian insolence in his own palace, after granting complete toleration for nearly twenty years. In fine, it might be held to be the duty of the historian, if he mentions persecutions at all, to inform his readers that when, under Constantine, the Christians secured freedom, they in the course of the fourth century killed ten times as many fellow-Christians in their quarrels as the Romans had killed in two hundred fifty years. They soon reversed the situation by getting the death-sentence decreed against pagans.

The transition from paganism to Christianity is equally misrepresented. Professor Langer introduces his long glorification of Constantine, in which all agree, with these words: "He is said to have seen in the sky a cross and the device *In hoc signo vinces*. Some time later he

became a Christian." One would hardly expect to find this moldy story of a vision in a modern historian; and as to the conversion, Constantine was not baptized until the end of his life twenty years later, and it has always been, and is, disputed in history whether he really embraced the faith. And in telling how, after vainly trying for years to bribe or intimidate the pagans to become Christians, he went on to found the Christian city of Constantinople, not one of our historians relates how this robust bastard of a rural barmaid (as St. Ambrose describes her) murdered his wife and natural son and was driven from Rome by the scorn of the Romans. Nor is it true that, as Professor Thompson says (p. 44), "Theodosius I was the first emperor to employ force in the suppression of paganism." The first such imperial decree was issued forty years before the accession of Theodosius, and the death-sentence was decreed twenty-five years before it. But we will pass to more important points.

V
The Fall of Rome

It is represented that two of the major discoveries of the new history are that there never was a Fall of Rome or a Dark Age. The Roman civilization "petered out and did not fall" says Professor Langer; though later (p. 146) we find him saying: "Ruined by invasion, the aqueducts cut [by the barbarians], Rome was reduced in population from half a million to 50,000." Which, it will be admitted, rather looks like a fall. Professor Geise, enthusiastically following Professor Thompson, puts the position of the new history forcibly:

> The Germans were regarded neither as conquerors nor as strangers by the Romans. No racial antagonism between them existed. . . . As the Roman Empire gradually crumbled like a dilapidated house, the Germans filled the ruined provinces, which were as ruins in the great edifice, and dwelt in these side by side with the native populace. The Romans grew more barbaric; the Germans more civilized. Together they and the Church fashioned new institutions and formed a new civilization out of the debris of the Roman institutions.

Even those who are only slightly familiar with Roman history yet know that between a quarter and a half million fierce uncivilized Asiatics, the Huns, and barbarous Goths, Vandals, Franks, Burgundians, *etc.* — only a few of the Germans had been partly softened by contact with the Romans — invaded the reluctant Empire between A.D. 370 and 470, will be surprised to hear that the Romans were quite friendly with them. Professor Lucas, while claiming that the older historians exaggerated the damage of Rome, admits (p. 62): "The invasion of the barbarians created a decisive influence on the culture of Europe . . . they disrupted the economic and social life and hastened the decline of the Empire." Professors Sheppard and Godfrey admit the word Fall. The invasions were, they say, "the chief causes of the Fall of Rome." Professor Barnes quarrels with us only for fixing a definite date for the fall; which, except in assigning the undisputed date of the deposition of the last Roman emperor [A.D. 476], we do not. He says (p. 320): "The

Western Empire did finally fade out, and antique science and culture blurred into medieval thought and institutions." Professor Thorndike does not like the word Fall, yet he thinks it remarkable that after the invasions "one peasant remained alive"; which sounds really devastating.

Professor J. W. Thompson is the most influential representative of the school, and his chief work, *The Middle Ages*, begins at about the year A.D. 300. A Fall of Rome in the fifth century would not be consistent with his thesis, which all the others more or less follow, that history was continuous — that, properly speaking, we ought not even to admit the phrase "Middle Ages" — so he scorns the idea of a "convulsive" or "catastrophic" change involved in talk about a Fall. Greek-Roman civilization passed normally into the medieval phase, he says. The barbarians were, he thinks, "astonishingly small in numbers in proportion to the Roman provincial population," which is a strange way to describe the onset upon a scattered and unwarned provincial population of more than 50,000 savage Huns (whom the people believed to be the offspring of devils and witches) on horses and more than a quarter of a million gigantic (to the Romans) Germans, mostly fresh from their barbaric homes, even though they came in successive waves. Professor Thompson himself speaks presently of the "hordes of Huns" and the "astonishing devastation" caused by the Vandals. Still, there was no Fall of Rome, he insists. "By a process as slow as the weathering of a great building, the Roman Empire disappeared," he somewhat desperately says. He is determined that we shall not admit a Dark Age.

In making out his case he refers to the work of Professor J. H. Robinson, the father of the new history. In his *New History* (1912) Robinson has one short chapter on "The Fall of Rome," and in this he repeatedly speaks of the "disintegration" and "dissolution" of the Empire. He is content to plead that there was more continuity of culture than was earlier believed. As a matter of fact, my friend Professor Robinson took the chair at a lecture on the "Causes of the Fall of Rome" which I delivered in Columbia University, in, I think, 1917, and neither on the platform nor over the tea table afterwards did he dissent.

To sum up, it is the contention of the new historians that they have corrected the older historians by discovering that the Empire perished by internal decay, as Professor Thompson says, or was so weakened by it that the barbarians easily overran it, and by exposing the untruth of the statement that the Huns, Goths, and Vandals trod a flourishing civilization underfoot. But who *are* these older historians? There seems to be a general disinclination to name them. Professor Barnes is unfor-

tunate in quoting "the historian Charles Kingsley of one hundred years ago." In point of fact, Kingsley was a Canon of the Church of England and a popular novelist who occasionally made a pleasant excursion into history but never had any authority on it. They must be aware that the title of Gibbon's classical work is *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and half the great work is devoted to the decline.

But none of them appears to have read the most important work on the Middle Ages written in Britain in the last century, Hallam's *View of the State of Europe in the Middle Ages*, or they would have found their thesis of gradual decline put, one hundred years ago, by a distinguished historian in stronger language than they use themselves and they could not have claimed a discovery. Hallam says (III, 270):

> We must not altogether ascribe the recession of literature to the barbaric destroyers of the Roman Empire. So gradual and apparently so irretrievable a decay had long before spread over all liberal studies that it is almost impossible to pronounce whether they would not have been almost equally extinguished if the august throne of the Caesars had been left to moulder by its intrinsic weakness.

Sir Samuel Dill, the highest authority on the period, more soberly but adequately describes the decay of the Empire long before the new history began (*Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*, 1899).

The new historians give us admirable summaries of more recent research on the causes of this decay but once more they avoid — ought we not to say suppress? — facts which are distasteful to the Church. They do not mention how such constructive work as Constantine did — some historians consider that his division of the Empire enfeebled the western half — was lost in the civil wars of his degenerate sons, the rending of the whole Empire for thirty years by a fierce and bloody theological quarrel, the alienation of the pagan middle class by the final wars against the worship of the old gods, and the incompetence of most of the Christian Emperors after A.D. 350.

On the other hand, historians like Professor Thompson, Professor Langer, and Professor Geise underrate, in favor of their general thesis, the effect of the barbaric invasions to an extent that other writers of the school resent. What are the facts? The Empire, stretched to limits that the demoralized army was incapable of defending, its trade at a low ebb, its middle class half-ruined by taxation and other burdens, was

extremely vulnerable by the year A.D. 376. Just then formidable movements and probably a great drought in Asia drove the savage Huns, the fiercest horsemen in the world, upon the Germans, who broke through the lines of semi-Romanized Goths and Vandals on the frontier and poured over almost the entire empire. To suggest that in these circumstances there was no panic or stampede is absurd. The Goths took the great city of Rome in A.D. 410 and, though they generally spared the buildings, they systematically looted it for three days and nights. Sir Samuel Dill says: "The shock given by the great catastrophe to old Roman pride and confidence must at the time have been overwhelming." St. Augustine, seeing the crowds of the wealthier, and now beggared, Romans who fled to Africa, spent ten years writing his chief work, *The City of God*, to disarm their anger. But when in A.D. 455 the Vandals came over from Africa, and fourteen days of plundering stripped the city of everything of value that the Goths had left, we may reasonably say that Rome had fallen. "Rome fell with the crash of a mighty slaughter," Augustine said.

The western Goths, estimated at over 80,000 in number, then ate their way back, like a swarm of locusts, through Italy — which the Huns then entered, and the eastern Goths later — to France and (except, as we shall see, for the southeast) spread over that country. The Vandals — also estimated at 80,000 — had already seized France, and there must have been a ruinous time for the country before the Goths drove the Vandals into Spain. But the Franks and the Burgundians, who were even fiercer than the Goths, fought and expelled them, so they were compelled in turn to wrest Spain from the Vandals, and these crossed the straits and seized Roman Africa as far as Carthage (Tunis). At the same time the Angles and Saxons seized Roman Britain. Italy, Gaul, Spain, Africa, and Britain were the five great provinces of the Empire. The Goths covered — not in a body but (which is worse) in broad and successive waves — at least 2,000 miles of it: the Vandals 3,000. And as in A.D. 476 they deposed the last Roman Emperor, you may be inclined to agree that there really was a Fall of Rome.

VI
The Dark Age

But, you may add, why should we suspect these new historians of having one eye on the clerical police when they discuss such a subject as the Fall of Rome. The chief reason is that they want to prove the "continuity of culture" a part of their denial that there ever was a Dark Age; which, until then, had been a sort of skeleton in the cupboard of Roman Catholic history. We thought we had been liberal in allowing at least one of the factors; the Roman Catholic plea that the Dark Age was due, not to the Church, but to the barbaric invasions. The new history both relieves and embarrasses them by proving that there were no "catastrophic" invasions, and no Dark Age at all. Professor Barnes allows the phrase for the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries — which surprises us, for the ninth and tenth centuries were worse — and Professor Lucas is moderate, but all the others share the scorn of Professor Langer and Professor Thompson for the licentious literary men of Renaissance days — it is from the writing from Cardinal Baronius, the Father of Roman Catholic history, that we borrow the phrase — who concocted the myth of the Dark Age, and the weak-kneed modern historians who adopted it.

The subject is discussed very vigorously and at great length by Professor Thompson in the introduction to his *Middle Ages*. In support of his claim he quotes a certain "Keutgen" whom I cannot trace (unless he means the Austrian Roman Catholic scholar of that name); an English writer, of ambiguous belief, of 300 years ago; a French Roman Catholic writer; and "Sir" [Dr.] Gilbert Murray, Renan, and Professor Hoffding. As an obvious rebuke to the libel and in support of his own contention that "it is utterly unhistorical" and "vicious" to talk even of a Middle Age he observes how the period produced St. Francis (heaven help us) and the pretty love story *Aucassin & Nicolette*. And both these appeared 800 years after the Fall of Rome anyway.

Professor Thompson later (1939) produced two specialist works of great erudition (*The Medieval Libraries* and *The Literacy of the Laity in the Middle Ages*), which seem to be the chief justification of the later writers who deny that there was a Dark Age. I will examine them presently but it will be useful to quote a couple of sentences from the first here:

> By the beginning of the seventh century the last lay [Roman] schools had disappeared.
>
> The 250 years which elapsed between Cassiodorus and Alcuin [about 550 and 800] are, intellectually, the darkest in European history (53).

And we shall see that after some show of intellectual vitality in the ninth century he finds the tenth and early part of the eleventh century darker than ever. This is the period we call the Dark Age, and as it was morally and economically even darker than it was intellectually — "the illiteracy of the common people is not open to question," he says — we seem to be fairly justified.

But surely, you will say, professors at American universities cannot, if this is correct, make such a blunder. They begin by making two blunders which vitiate their whole case. They misrepresent the length of the period which we call the Dark Age and say that we include the thirteenth century; they say that they are correcting historians who declare that during that period Christian Europe was *uniformly* dark, at all periods and in all regions. Both these statements are entirely incorrect and have been incautiously borrowed from Roman Catholic literature. They never quote one modern historian who says these two things about the Dark Age.

Even Professor Haskins says in his *Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* that the Dark Age means "all that came between A.D. 476 and 1453." No responsible historical writer ever included the twelfth and thirteenth, much less the fourteenth century in the Dark Age. Events were fluid, and if precise years are named they are understood to be approximate dates. I have always given the Dark Age as from about A.D. 450 to about 1050. Others say A.D. 500 to 1000, as Buckle does, or 1100, but never later.

But the much more important mistake is to say that we ever represent the period in Europe as uniformly dark. Professor Barnes says (I, 349): "The more we learn about the Middle Ages the less dark they appear. To regard them as a uniform period of stagnant barbarism is very misleading." Notice how he makes the Dark Age equivalent to the whole Middle Ages. If we assume that he meant the early part of the Middle Ages, the Dark Age, we are disappointed to find that the only writers he quotes as offending in this way are men of the fifteenth century, who are never read today. Certainly the reproach does not apply to me, but I think that all historians of the last 150 years admit that after the Fall of Rome a decent culture survived in southeastern France,

which the barbarians spared, for about a century; that the eastern Goths set up a fair civilization in north Italy in the sixth century, and the Lombards, a still higher, broader, and more permanent culture in the sixth century; that the English and Irish monks had a great zeal for at least theological learning about the same time; and that there was some revival in France and western Germany in the ninth century and under Otto of the Saxons (in a small area) in the tenth. Nearly all the "discoveries" of the new history refer to these periods and regions, which we always admitted.

The truth is that not a single one of these historians frankly meets our real reproach. Put briefly, it is this: In the Rome of the fourth century there were three entirely free workers to one slave, and even the slaves (of the cities), Dill says, "corresponded to our free laboring class" and were protected by law from cruelty; but from A.D. 500 to 1100 the vast majority of the workers of Europe were serfs — a distinction from "slave" which is, Vinogrador says, "late and artificial." The urban workers had had free education, princely free entertainments, free bread, magnificent baths (almost free) and gymnasia, and a splendid free supply of good water, free medical treatment, easy hours and holidays on 200 out of 365 days; from A.D. 500 to 1100 the workers had none of these things, no freedom, and no protection from cruelty. In the Empire, women had been on the same legal and social footing as men; from A.D. 500 to 1100 they were treated as cattle. In the empire a large number of fine cities had half a million to a million citizens; from A.D. 500 to 1100 no towns had more than 40,000 and very few that much. In Roman law torture was very restricted; after the year A.D. 500 horrible tortures and mutilations were sanctioned in law, the ordeal replaced trial, and in daily life the loss of eyes, ears, tongue, feet, or testicles was appallingly common. The Romans had produced a fine literature, had raised splendid buildings in the provincial towns and aqueducts, bridges, good roads, theaters, etc., all over the empire; from 500 to 1100 hardly a book was written that we now read, hardly a picture painted, a statue carved, or a building raised (except after 1000 in Germany) that we go to see. The Romans had had libraries up to 500,000 volumes; there was not one of more than 600 volumes in Christian Europe from 500 to 1100. That is why we speak of the Dark Age. (Who answers this indictment?)

VII
The Greek Empire

Our critics give highly colored accounts of the Eastern or Greek or, as it centered upon ancient Byzantium, Byzantine half of the Roman Empire. They forget to explain why the empire perished of internal decay in the west and did not in the east. They ignore the fact that in ten centuries (A.D. 400 to 1400) this rich civilization did not produce a book that even cultivated folk read today and, except Santa Sophia at Constantinople, raised no building that attracts the tourist; or why there is no mention of it in the history of science, and its only philosopher, Psellos, is never mentioned in histories of philosophy. The only great men our historians discover in the 1,000 years is Justinian; the only great achievement the Justinian Code. But they do not tell that the Code was compiled by Trebonian, who is generally believed to have been a pagan, and they mislead readers about Justinian and his time. He was a notoriously dissipated young man, and his age was so low that he, though heir to the throne, could marry the most obscene little prostitute of the Circus and the Theater. Professor Thompson calls one of the later queens, Eirene, "one of the most distinguished women in history." She has this one distinction that, as all admit, she had her son's eyes cut out so that she could keep power in her own hands.

An eminent historian, Professor Lecky — and, unlike the new historians, he read Greek — describes the Byzantine Empire as "one of the least noble forms that civilization has yet assumed" and "one of the most contemptible in history" (*History of European Morals*, 1911 ed., II, 698). I wrote a history of it in the form of a series of biographies of the empresses and their husbands (*The Empresses of Constantinople*, 1911), and I found the moral record of royalty and the church revolting. R. Byron (*Byzantine Achievement*, 1929) has made the most he could of its metal work, its mosaics and illuminated books, its embroideries, and so on. As I said, it remained wealthy, never having been spoiled by Goth or Vandal. But even in art it was far inferior to the Arab-Persian civilization, and to compare its culture to the Muslim is like comparing Father Divine to a professor at Columbia; while the general standard of morals was low from the fourth century to the fifteenth, and the appalling prevalence of mutilation in Europe was borrowed from the Greeks.

Where else in the world would you find a pious bishop, on trial in court for raping a nun, lifting up his skirts to show the court and the public that St. Peter had removed his genitals years before to enable him to preserve his chastity!

VIII
The Work of Gregory The Great

Our historians had no space to tell of one of the most promising developments of the ancient world, the Ionian-Epicurian philosophy, and the remarkable flowering of this in the social and philanthropic work of the Roman empire, but they can devote five to ten pages to Pope Gregory the Great and his work. Their discovery of the importance of this — not, of course, from the ecclesiastical but the social angle — seems to be one of those things that now forbid us to speak of the Dark Age. Professor Thompson says that "Rome rose to hitherto unreached heights of influence under Gregory the Great"(p. 173). If he means papal influence. . . . But any man who recalls the great city under the Emperor Hadrian must shudder at the comparison. Unfortunately, readers who have to rely on the new history will not realize the difference between Rome at the end of the first century with its million people, its superb flora and temples, its sewers and water supply, etc., and the miserable, stinking, plague-ridden city of 40,000 densely ignorant folk in the time of Gregory (A.D. 590-604).

Gregory was profoundly religious, vigorous, and shrewd. He seems really to have believed that the end of the world was at hand; and he pointed out to the rich that it would be as hard for them to get into heaven if they remained rich as for the camel to get through the eye of a needle. So in their thousands they bequeathed or gave their possessions to the church until it owned 1,600 square miles of the best land in Italy and hundreds of thousands of slaves to till it. In modern values it is estimated that the papacy had an income of about $2,000,000 a year: a prodigious sum in those days.

That was, our historians omit to say, the beginning of the papal states. They deliberately shirk the matter of slavery. No pope, father, bishop, or other Roman Catholic leader ever condemned slavery before the French Revolution did. Sometimes it is said that Gregory at least willingly freed slaves, but in all the 850 letters he has left us you will find only that he freed slaves who paid or promised to leave money to the church. The slavery of the ancient world is a far more important matter for the modern student of history to consider than the antics of kings and the measures taken by the popes to increase the wealth and power

of the church, yet the complete failure of the church to condemn it and the fact that by far the most influential of the Fathers, Augustine, declared it to be a just part of the divinely-appointed social order are never mentioned. (Gregory forbade the clergy to admit a slave to their sacred order lest "his vileness pollute it.")

Nor is there, from the historical angle, any justification for giving even a paragraph to Gregory I. He was a great churchman but an enemy of human progress. Attempts to restore culture by some of those provincial bishops whom Professor Thompson diligently collects in order to brighten the Dark Age were condemned and suppressed by Gregory. He sent a letter (VI. 54) to Bishop Desiderius of Vienne denouncing him for "the horrible crime of teaching grammar" (reading and writing) to his people. It was a tradition in Rome picked up and endorsed long afterwards by the learned Abbot John of Salisbury (*Polycraticus* II, 26) that it was Gregory who destroyed the last surviving fragments of the great Roman library of imperial days. The Pope who succeeded Gregory tried to restore some culture in Rome and was probably murdered by the Romans.

We particularly resent this glorification of Gregory in profane history because in him we have a lamentable illustration of the unscrupulousness (in the interest of the Church) of pious men. He is one of the popes that those writers have in mind who contend that the "good" popes did more harm to European civilization than the "bad." He warmly commended an abbot who had the eyes of one of his monks cut out for violating chastity, but he had a warm and courteous correspondence with the apostate monk Venantius when he became a rich man. The vilest woman in Europe at this time, if not one of the vilest in European history, was Queen Brunichildis. But she helped Gregory's plans and persecuted his episcopal opponents, so in letter after letter (vii, 5, 50, 59, etc.) he showered compliments upon her. She was, he assured this murderous virago, "filled with the piety of heavenly grace." The Greek Emperor Maurice had spoken of Gregory as "that old fool." So when Maurice was murdered by the brutal usurper Phocas, the Pope, who knew Constantinople well and had spies there, wrote the man a sickening letter of triumph, "Glory be to God in the highest" it begins: and it ends, "Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad." This was one of the greatest men of the Dark Age. The other was Charlemagne.

IX
The Work of Charlemagne

In "a reign of the first magnitude in European history," as Professor Langer calls that of the Frankish monarch, the new historians, who ignore the restoration under the Ostrogoths and under the Lombards, claim that Europe had its first rebirth, the Carolingian Renaissance. Have we then discovered some facts about his work that correct earlier estimates of it? Not one. Indeed the leading modern biographer of the monarch, H. W. C. Davis, says that it is now generally acknowledged in Europe that the importance of his work has been greatly exaggerated. He says: "Charlemagne built no great cities and left no enduring memorial of his presence; nor did he, like the Greek, enrich the world of art, of literature, or of science." The chorus of clerical praise which made his reputation — at one time the Church canonized him but repented — is in one respect amusing. He was as industriously immoral as any Irish king of old days. A blond giant (six feet six inches), he had the appetites and temper of a giant. There was, in fact, a French tradition that the unit of measurement was really not taken from his foot but from a more delicate organ. At all events, he had four or five wives in succession, an unknown number (four at one time) of mistresses, and twenty known bastards. His palace was an Abode of Love even for his daughters, and as he forbade these to marry an even darker suspicion has been entertained. In his Saxon wars he behaved with savagery, and Davis — a great admirer of him, by the way — says that still in his later years he practiced "inexcusable cruelties."

These personal features are, however, not inconsistent with a claim that he and his council of nobles, bishops, and abbots introduced a good deal of organization into the wild sprawling kingdom of the Franks. This work of his is no new discovery, for his Capitularies (decrees) have always been known. In this respect our only complaint is that the historians generally conceal the fact that most of his work was short-lived. His kingdom fell into a state of chaos after his death owing to the vicious quarrels and incompetence of his heirs, and it became worse as time went on. Professor Lucas says (p. 339): "As for civilization in France in the tenth century, it seems to be one of violence unrelieved by any sense of right or honor." Davis says that "to all intents

and purposes the Frankish Empire was buried in the grave of Charlemagne." Professor Barnes says (I, 480):

> By a strange irony of fate the reign of the most powerful administrators and enlightened rulers in the history of western civilization was followed by one of the blackest periods of political anarchy and intellectual backwardness in the whole medieval period . . . the later ninth and tenth centuries in western Europe were as dark as the earlier Dark Age.

The real irony is to take the word Renaissance, a period that had a deep and permanent influence on civilization, and insist that we must give it to this partial and short-lived recovery and must therefore cease to talk about a Dark Age.

In western Germany — eastern was still uncivilized — there was, as we have always known, some regard for culture kindled by Charlemagne, but the extent of it is usually exaggerated and the new historians misrepresent it. Their (and the Roman Catholic version) is that among the many foreign visitors to the palace at Aachen was a learned monk named Alcuin, and Charlemagne was so impressed by his account of the intellectual vitality of the monasteries in the north of England that he begged Alcuin to remain and create a similar movement in his kingdom. As Professor Langer says: "He set up the Palace School under Alcuin and gave grants to the bishops and abbots for schools." We have the works of "the learned Alcuin"; lengthy commentaries on the Bible and rudimentary short treatises on grammar, dialectics, and music (crumbs from the ancient Greek table) that no one even glances at today. It is true that there was at this time a zeal for learning among the monks of England and Ireland. I believe that Professor Barnes is the only one of the new historians who explains that the Druids, the pagan priests who preceded Christianity in Ireland, England, and part of France, had been very zealous in cultivating such learning as was available to them, and the early priests and monks had to emulate them. But this monastic culture was almost purely theological, and, in adopting this Roman Catholic version of Charlemagne's concern for educating, our historians have, by suppressing the share of the Lombards, gravely falsified the cultural history of Europe.

It was in the schools of Lombardy that Charlemagne met and engaged Alcuin, who had apparently picked up there the little he knew beyond theology; and Eginbard, Charlemagne's secretary, suggests that the Lombard masters whom the king brought to Aachen with

Alcuin were more important than the English monk. Our historians, who strain the evidence to prove that they have found a Carolingian or an Ottonian Renaissance, barely mention that, as we have always known, there was in Italy in the seventh and eighth centuries a restoration of culture that was far more successful and more permanent. But the papacy got Charlemagne and his father, as I will tell presently, to destroy this Lombard monarchy out of greed for its territory, so it is treated as negligible in the new history.

The Lombards, at first as savage as any of the Germanic peoples, settled in North Italy and, largely stimulated by the remains and fine work of the Eastern Goths to which I have referred, in two or three generations developed, in cooperation with the Italians, a promising civilization. They had a number of fine cities which, Davis says, "recalled the splendor of the Roman Empire." They were the best artists in Europe — the very un-Jewish Jesus-type which we still adopt in art is Lombard — because the Iconoclastic (statue-breaking) fury was then raging in the Greek world, and the artists flocked to Lombardy. They had so great a zeal for education and culture that their schools attracted men like Alcuin from all parts of Europe, and their higher culture remained while Rome sank to its foulest depths; and, as everybody knows, the Lombard cities became the leaders of Europe in the real and permanent Renaissance. This was Charlemagne's inspiration. But this important factor in the cultural development of Europe has no more place in the new history than the equally or more important Ionian-Epicurean development in the Greek-Roman world has.

Davis, the chief modern biographer of Charlemagne, fully recognizes that the Lombard influence was far greater than that of Alcuin, though it is not mentioned now in nine references in modern literature out of ten. He rightly says: "Paul the Deacon and Peter of Pisa contributed to the general stock of finer scholarship than his; some knowledge of Greek, of history and of classical antiquities." But historians of education acknowledge that the Frankish bishops and abbots opposed education and opened few schools; and, as Davis says, "the whole cultural enterprise was buried in the grave of Charlemagne."

X
Charlemagne and The Papal States

Gregory I, we saw, acquired for his church, partly at least by persuading rich landowners that the end of the world approached and their bank books would be examined at the gate of paradise, about 1,600 square miles of Italy. This was the beginning of the Papal States, for the Pope was now king over half of Italy and claimed more. They were obtained, chiefly from Charlemagne, by the use of one of the most blatant forgeries in history, the Donation of Constantine. This was fabricated in the Papal Court, and from that time to the nineteenth century Italy was repeatedly sodden with blood as the popes fought, or made the Roman Catholic monarchs fight, for their temporal power. As Dean Milman says:

> Rome, jealous of all temporal sovereignty but her own, yielded up or made Italy a battlefield of the Transalpine and the stranger, and at the same time so secularized her own spiritual supremacy as to confound altogether the priest and the politician, to degrade absolutely and almost irrevocably the Kingdom of Christ into a kingdom of the world.

What do our historians make of this sordid chapter? Most of them do not mention the Donation of Constantine; which is, says the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, "without doubt a forgery." Some reflect that the papacy considered itself the heir of the Caesars, but they still do not say that this was because they forged a document in which Constantine made them his heirs. Professor Langer wrongly says that Charlemagne merely confirmed his father's donation of territory. Not one of them gives the reader the least idea of the real and revolting history of the time; though this is not disputed and may be conveniently read in Gregorovius' impartial history of the City of Rome, or in the *Cambridge History*.

The Lombards encroached upon the territory which the popes claimed and the Pope invited a Frankish leader, Charles Martel, a brutal spoiler of churches and monasteries who was called Antichrist by the Frankish clergy, to come and destroy the Lombard civilization. When

he refused, the popes entered into so ugly and truculent a struggle with the Lombards that Rome was barbarized. A usurper of the papacy was left lying on the street with his eyes cut out, and his bishops and priests lost their eyes and tongues by order of the legitimate Pope. Within ten years there was another papal revolution, and the Pope ordered more of these mutilations. Nobles, priests, and people were at a level of barbarism. Just then Charlemagne's father Pepin, chief official of the Frankish royal court, usurped the throne with the Pope's permission — in fact, order — and showed his gratitude by taking territory from the Lombards and giving it to the Pope. The Lombards returned, but Pepin refused to move until the Pope forged a letter (which we have) in the name of St. Peter, and pretended that it had come down from heaven. It was next Charlemagne's turn to oblige the papacy, and it was during his campaign in Italy that he met Alcuin. He went on to Rome, and, standing terrified by the alleged (and fraudulent) tomb of Peter and Paul, he signed a deed which, according to the official *Book of the Popes*, assigned the greater part of Italy to the papacy. The only point that even Roman Catholics question is whether this was based upon the Donation of Constantine: but a letter written by the Pope to Charlemagne in A.D. 777 shows that it was. How the Pope so pestered Charlemagne in the next twenty years that the Frank had the "insolence" to arrest the Pope's legate, and how the next Pope's legate, and how the next Pope declared Charlemagne head of the restored Roman Empire does not concern us here.

XI
Learning in The Dark Age

"The more we learn about the Middle Ages," says Professor Barnes, "the less dark it appears." He is obviously referring to the early part of the Middle Ages, the Dark Age — that pleasant and holy period of which I have just given you a glimpse — and I assume that he, like all others who reject the Dark Age, is relying on two learned works of Professor J. W. Thompson (and various collaborations) which were written for the express purpose. One is *The Medieval Library* (1939); the other, *The Literacy of the Laity in the Middle Ages* (1939).

Let me repeat the warning I gave on a preceding page. The first part of it — that these historians confuse the Dark Age and the Middle Ages by saying that we extend the Dark Age to the thirteenth, fourteenth, or even fifteenth century — does not so much apply here because Professor Thompson, who disdained so stupid a phrase as Dark Age, expressly says "medieval." But this means that two-thirds of both books, not referring to Christian Europe between A.D. 500 and 1100, have no interest, since no one calls Europe dark after 1100. We have, we shall see, other epithets for it. The second part of my warning — that no one ever said that Europe was uniformly dark in the Dark Age — must be kept steadily in mind. The naive joy with which Professor Thompson learns that some bookworm (generally a monk or priest) in Europe has discovered that some abbot or bishop, usually in the areas or periods which we allow to have had some zeal for culture, had a score or several score of books, almost always on theology, warns us that his eagerness to confute some (always unnamed) antagonist and relieve the Middle Ages of this man's wicked aspersions seems to have disturbed his sense of proportion.

He tries to give some importance even to these tiny collections by stressing the fact that books were rare, but here again he is not quite candid: "The Roman Emperors had possessed libraries which disintegrated so completely as institutions in the general collapse of civilization that very many of them had been forgotten." Not only the Roman Emperors and the patricians but even the "idle rich," as Ammianus says, had good libraries as part of their show of wealth. What happened to the books — parchment does not "disintegrate" like our paper — is

seen in the fate of the greatest library of the ancient world, that (or those) of Alexandria under the Ptolemies with 530,000 books. Professor Thompson will hardly ask us to accept the Christian legend, which first appeared 600 years after the supposed event, that the Arabs burned the books. They were notoriously burned by monk-led mobs of Christians in the year A.D. 389 as were most of the temples, libraries, and art collections.

What sort of libraries, then, does he find in six or seven centuries of the Dark Age? The six largest monastic collections are 237, 256, 400, 415, 590, and 660 volumes, and they were generally in those periods or areas that had a temporary zeal for study. The largest was in Lombard, Italy. In the whole period there are, he deplores, few references to the libraries of Rome. "The libraries," he says, "must have lain unused and neglected for many generations," but there was a cultural revival from 1050 to 1200. The Bishop, John of Salisbury, one of the best contemporary scholars, complains that learning was at its lowest in the twelfth century, but we shall see later what revival there really was. At all the learned research, chiefly of Roman Catholic scholars, which has discovered libraries of twenty to one hundred books we smile. How many abbots and bishops must there have been in Europe during the twenty-five generations of the Dark Age? And did anybody ever doubt that at least a good proportion of them had a few religious books?

For these libraries were almost entirely theological. A few had copies of the weird works in which Christian writers of the fifth and sixth centuries reproduced some of the weaker elements of ancient science, but of the finer classical literature, except the poet Virgil — who was believed in the Middle Ages to have had a special preview of Christ — we find hardly any trace until the ninth century, when the Lombards had a score of large schools copying and reading the classics as well as theology. Professor Thompson does not explain how the theological literature, which consisted mainly of works of the Fathers that had been written before A.D. 450, had not "disintegrated" like the pagan literature in the "collapse" (there was no "fall," of course), but he does rebuke the absurd claim (of Roman Catholics) that "the monks preserved the classics" (p. 30): "It is true that the only extant manuscripts of many important books have come to us through the monastic libraries, but it is equally true that this preservation was as much due to neglect or chance as it was to conscious intention." As I have often pointed out, the claim that medieval monks zealously copied out Ovid (whom even the Romans banished for obscenity), the epicure Horace, the erotic Catullus, etc., only confirms our estimate of the life of the monasteries.

Even the idea that the monks of the Dark Age as a whole spent any appreciable time copying Bibles and religious books is absurd. Twenty-five generations — if I may use the indelicate expression in speaking of monks — would have produced hundreds of thousands of copies, even making allowance for their slow and often artistic script. In fact, parchment was comparatively rare after the breach with the Greeks, and the monks rubbed out Latin classics to make way for their religious trash. Yet by the eleventh century, when the Spanish Arabs had certainly over a million books in one country, all the figures for Christendom put together do not come to 10,000.

Professor Thompson's second work of erudition, *The Literacy of The Laity in The Middle Ages* (1939) does not really give any support to the idea that we "find the early Middle Ages brighter the more we study them." In the opening sentence he quotes Hallam as an awful example of the historian who libels (or creates) the Dark Age. What this distinguished British historian says in his *View of the State of Society in the Middle Ages* (ch. IX, pt. I) is: "For many centuries [not the whole Dark Age] it was rare [not unknown] for a layman of whatever rank to know how to sign his own name." Professor Thompson admits that we may divide the population at that time into eighty percent workers (serfs or slaves), ten percent nobles, and ten percent clerics. He grants the complete illiteracy of the eighty percent, and he has no evidence to refute the statement of Hallam that at times over whole regions the priests did not understand the Latin of their ritual. (King Alfred of England, for instance, wrote that there was not a single priest in the south of England — the north was then a wilderness — who could understand Latin.) Professor Thompson's work applies, as he says, only to the nobles. He ignores Hallam's warning that many of the nobles were clerics: in fact, the higher clergy and richer abbots were generally nobles, often not priests.

However, we find little that is new. To the two kings whom Hallam named as able to write he adds four Visigothic and new totally unknown Kings of Spain; and these he has not discovered but quotes from the Cambridge *Medieval History*. He admits that even Charlemagne could not write, although his secretary says that he tried hard to learn. For the rest it will be enough to quote Professor Thompson's own summing up of his learned work: "It is not justifiable to state categorically that *only* clerics had a knowledge of Latin." And he covers a much larger period than the Dark Age. It is not at all unusual, he says, to find nobles of the twelfth century who could read both Latin and French. Naturally. It was the age of Abelard, of independent schools, and, above all, of the

troubadours; one of the first of whom was the great Duke of Aquitaine.

In fine, let us glance at the list of the men of commanding intelligence and great learning whom the new historians quote to rebuke our libel of the Dark Age: Isidore Boetius, Cassiodorus, Bede, Alcuin, Boniface, Paschasius Radbertus, Rabanus Maurus, Walafrid Strabe, Lupus of Ferrieres, Scotus Erigena, and Gerbert. Boetius was a descendant of the cultivated pagan Mayor of Rome, Symmachus, and inherited his fine library; and as he never mentions Christianity in his best work (*On the Consolation of Philosophy*), which was written while he awaited execution for conspiracy, his orthodoxy is doubted. Cassiodorus was another Roman noble of the same sixth century with an inherited library. Neither was a great man nor a great writer. Archbishop Isidore of Seville preserves a few fragments of ancient learning in his large pudding of credulity and theology. Bede would be unknown today except that he wrote a *History of England* from which we can sift a lot of useful information. With Alcuin's great learning I have already dealt. The next five men you will not expect me to take seriously. John Scotus Erigena, or John the Irishman, of the ninth century, is the only one in whom we recognize high intellectual ability. He seems to have been neither a cleric nor a monk, but he worked mainly on theology (for want of a better subject in those days), and his ablest work *On the Division of Nature*, a pantheistic treatise, was condemned by the Church in 1225 as "swarming with worms of heresy." Gerbert I will consider separately. I will conclude this section with Hallam's warning (II, 290): "If we would listen to some literary historians we should believe that the darkest age contained many individuals not only distinguished among contemporary churchmen but positively eminent for ability and knowledge. . . . Bede, Alcuin, Hinemar, Raban, and a number of inferior names become real giants of learning." He explains that by "some literary historians" he means French monks of the eighteenth century. We thought they were dead and buried.

XII
Gerbert: Pope Sylvester II

I consider Gerbert separately because not only is he the brightest star in the Roman Catholic firmament at this time, but most of our modern American manuals of European or universal history agree with the Roman Catholics. In point of fact, his is the only name from the Dark Age that you will find mentioned in our histories of science. A Pope among the scientists! And he clearly had a knowledge of mathematics and physics that was unusual in Christendom at that time. But where he got his knowledge, and how he came to sit (for a few uneasy years) on the papal throne in one of the periods of its deepest degradation, are questions of great interest to which you will hardly find the slenderest clue in the new history. It may be thought that Professor Thompson provides a clue when he says (p. 387) that Gerbert was a monk in a monastery in the south of France and adds: "Count Borel of Barcelona took him to Christian Spain, where, perhaps — it is not certain — Gerbert came into contact with Saracenic learning." But when I tell you that even the *Catholic Encyclopedia* admits that he studied in the Arab colleges of Cordova, their superb capital, and Seville, and that no historian of science questions that his learning was derived from the Arabs — in this case wrongly called Saracens — you will feel that it would have been better if Professor Thompson had said nothing.

The fact is that the true story, which is interesting, of Gerbert exposes another great defect of the new history. It claims to be an investigation of the advance of culture and civilization, yet it suppresses or most inadequately mentions four developments which were important factors in the creation of our civilization; thus leaving the field clear for the false claims of the Roman Catholic Church. The first and most important was, we saw, the Ionian-Epicurean set of ideas, which were such an inspiration to the Roman Empire. The second was the Ostrogothic civilization, and the third and far more important was the Lombard civilization which permanently elevated North-Central Italy. Both these were destroyed by the popes. The fourth, to which we now come, was equally important. It was the presence of a brilliant civilization in Spain in amiable correspondence with southeastern France, or in the lower half of Spain and Portugal, while the Dark Age

was at its darkest in Christian Europe.

When, in the seventh century, the Arabs crossed from Morocco to Spain, they pinned up the Christian princes and a remnant of their people on the shores of the Bay of Biscay, and they left Barcelona and its province in Christian hands. It was south of Madrid, which was then a frontier village, that in little over a century — though they had started from barbarism — they built up a civilization only second to the Greek-Roman and in several ways superior to it. Skeptical Arabs were the rulers and constructors, but the Christians, who formed the majority of the 30,000,000 population, mingled and cooperated cordially with them and the Jews, except when some fanatical preacher disturbed them; and the Christians of Barcelona also had the most friendly relations with them. I will return later to them, and need say here only that they had a system of practically universal education and an intellectual vitality far beyond that of any ancient land; and that through Catalonia there was an open and well-trodden road to southern France. Provence is only second to Andalusia in literary tradition as the land of sunshine, music and love.

Soon after the middle of the tenth century the Count of Barcelona found the bright boy Gerbert in a monastery-school of southern France — there is no evidence that he ever became a monk — and took him to Barcelona. In his life of Gerbert the (Roman Catholic) Duke de la Salle de Rochemaure shows that he certainly studied at Cordova, and Arab writers tell us that he had the usual amorous adventures and on leaving stole some of his Arab host's books. However that may be, his career in the Church when he returned to France was far from edifying. Historians attribute to him a scalding indictment of the papacy — it says, "which in our time doth pour out a monstrous darkness that will live in history" — that was read by a bishop at the Council of Rheims in 991. Only eight years later he was imposed as Pope by the Emperor Otto III upon the Roman priests and people whom he had described as ignorant as cattle. In three years the Romans were so exasperated that they drove the Emperor and his army and the Pope from Rome, and on his return, a few months later, they (there is a growing reason to believe) poisoned the Pope. Such was the glamorous career of the only scientific Pope; which, says Professor Thorndike, "indicates that the age at least respected scholarship." But our only interest here is that this most learned man of the Dark Age derived his secular erudition, such as it was, from free and hospitable Moslem colleges in one of the greatest of Arab cities.

XIII
The Ottonian Renaissance

But while the new historians have not perceived that Europe was being slowly stimulated by a great Moslem civilization in Spain, as we shall see, they almost all lay great stress on what they call the contemporary "Ottonian Renaissance." Indeed, some of them almost claim it to be, like "the Carolingian Renaissance," one of the discoveries of the new history and one of the chief reasons why we must cease to speak of a Dark Age. Professor Thompson, it is true, rather disdains it when he speaks about "the so-called Ottonian Renaissance." He claims that it was not the Ottos but the Church that led whatever revival there was; and this improvement has always been adequately described in history.

Otto I, Roman Emperor and King of Saxony, an illiterate and boorish man, was a strong man who in nearly forty years of rule crushed the anarchic disorder caused by his nobles and in many ways reorganized his territory. But how little he cared about the cities' cultural or moral improvement is shown by an anecdote that Bishop Liusprand of Cremona (Lombardy), who was in his court and was the best historian of the time, tells about him. One of the filthiest popes of that time, John XII, was his ally and deposed rebellious German bishops for him. When it was pointed out to Otto that the Pope (as proved in trial later) revelled in vice (adultery, rape, incest, sodomy, mutilations, etc.) he laughingly said, "Let him sow his wild oats." When the Pope quarrelled with him he challenged John to choose two knights to fight a duel with two champions of the German bishops.

It was Otto's brother, Bruno, Archbishop of Cologne, who invited Lombards to the Court and for a time stimulated a zeal for art and culture. Otto I was persuaded to marry his son, Otto II, to a Greek princess, and now a number of Greek scholars and artists joined the circle. The only permanent outcome, apart from a reform of the monasteries which led to a reform of the degraded papacy, was the appearance of the Romanesque architecture, the first step towards the Gothic, and the building of some fine churches. But the style itself, an adaptation of the Roman to northern conditions, shows that the creators of it came from Lombardy, like the best scholars of the court. Otto

II took little interest in the cultural development, and his son Otto III was only three years old at his accession, and twenty-two years old when he died. Gerbert, whom he had made Pope, had been his tutor. It is admitted that he was an unbalanced and visionary youth, egged on by his Greek mother to aspire to be Emperor of the world.

By all means let us recognize this local temporary advance, but it was the lighting of a few candles in comparison with the splendor of the contemporary civilization of Arab Spain. About the year 950, Archbishop Bruno, the brain of the "Renaissance," sent a deputation headed by a ragged and dirty monk to the court of Abd-er-Rahman III at Cordova. The letter which the monk brought from the "cultured" archbishop was insulting to Islam and the Moslems, and the monk doubtless expected the crown of martyrdom. But the Caliph, a skeptic and ideally tolerant — he had a Christian bishop among his diplomats — laughingly promised to see this freak from the barbaric north. He was received at the vast white-marble and alabaster Zahra palace, a superb memorial of the favorite lady of the harem. Round it was a park, so spacious and beautiful, that a contemporary Arab architect says that it took 12,000 loaves a day to feed the goldfish in the ornamental lakes, and every shrub and flower known throughout the Arab empire bloomed. The monk crossed the great marble courtyard between a royal bodyguard of 12,000 men in silk and jewels, an immense silk awning keeping off the sun, superb carpets and tapestries covering the floor and walls to the golden throne, encrusted with jewels, on which the genial caliph sat. If the 6,000 ladies of his harem were watching from their windows. . . . That, at all events, was the true measure of the difference between Germany under its brilliant Ottonian "Renaissance," to which our historians devote chapters, and the much smaller territory of the Spanish Arabs. Abd-er-Rahman could have bought up the whole Roman Empire at that time almost with a year's income, yet it came from light taxations on 30,000,000 free, happy, and prosperous people. Does the new history deal fairly with the student in concealing all this?

XIV
Hildebrand: Gregory VII

When the book in which I told the story of the Arabs in Spain (*The Splendor of Moorish Spain*, 1935) was published in England — there is a summary of it in one of my Little Blue Books (*The Moors in Spain*) — a high official of the Persian court wrote me challenging my high appreciation of the character of Abd-er-Rahman. That caliph was contemptuous of the Koran and urged his people to enjoy wine and all other pleasures, so the orthodox Moslems have tampered with the records. But I found an unexpurgated edition of the famous Arab historian Al-Makkari and quoted his assurance that this skeptical and voluptuous caliph was "the mildest and most enlightened sovereign who ever ruled a country" and had lifted it from chaos to a magical prosperity in twenty years. There were several such monarchs outside Christendom during the Dark Age — Tai-Tsung in China, Mamun in Persia, etc. — but, like the Emperor Hadrian and the Caliph, they hardly get a line in the new history, while popes like Gregory I, Gerbert, and Gregory VII get pages.

This is another of the pervading defects. In modern history we expect to hear, not what men did for the power of the church but what they did for the race. Gregory I, we saw, did nothing, and the learning of Gerbert died with him. Gregory VII, who enjoys more space even than the other Gregory, did his best to put back the advancing clock. The Arab civilization of the tenth and eleventh centuries, while just as distinguished as the ancient Roman for the education and philanthropic service of the people, surpassed it in the cultivation of science and art. It excelled in a feeling for beauty and cleanliness, even among the poor, and in the keenest enjoyment of both intellectual and esthetic pleasure. Traveling in Andalusia I wondered how it ever got the reputation it has as a land of love, song and laughter. This repute, like the Spanish courtesy, lingers from the time of the Arabs. The cultivation of science, the full and keen enjoyment of life, were the elements that the Arabs were contributing to the expanding civilization. The asceticism of Gregory would have frozen the warm and scented world they were building if Christendom had listened to his dreary message, and the historian can hardly excuse the Pope on the ground that his followers defied him. He

was driven from Rome itself by the people for the ruin and suffering he had brought upon them, and he died in exile, hated by half of Europe.

Two of the chief tasks that Gregory VII took up were to impose celibacy on the clergy and to fight the Roman (German) Emperor in regard to his rights over bishops. It is amusing to see how our historians evade the first point, one of the greatest revolutions in contemporary Europe, though they seem to be unaware that, as H. C. Lea had abundantly proved, in depriving (largely by means of savage mobs) the priests of their (to that time) legitimate wives, Gregory opened the door to a veritable plague of clerical incest and adultery. Nor are our historians as eloquent as usual in regard to the fifty years of bitter and bloody fighting over the investiture of bishops which ended in a compromise. They do not tell how Gregory consecrated the maxim that to the clergy the end justifies the means. In one of his letters (I, 7) he warmly quotes the grim biblical sentence, "Cursed is he that *refraineth* his sword from blood," and he and his lieutenants used forged documents and cheated, while the Pope made a slight matter of a "lie that is told in a good cause" (IX, 2). Yet even here the new historian finds some satisfaction. Did not Gregory give the world for all time the spectacle of the triumph of the spiritual over the material when he made the proud and fiery young emperor Henry IV kneel, barefoot, in the snows of Canossa and beg his forgiveness? Why, every literary man and artist, even political orators, know the meaning of "Back to Canossa."

Yes; but historians don't. It is true that some of the new historians endorse the myth; others hint at it; others (Langer and Lucas, for instance) are silent. Professors Wallbank and Taylor call it "one of the most dramatic scenes in history" and describe it thus: "Henry appeared in the forecourt of the castle, dressed in the garb of a penitent, standing barefoot in the snow for three days, begging forgiveness." Just here you get a peculiar view of the new history. Its chief representative, Thompson, says that "every historical scholar today who is worthy of the name knows that Canossa was a victory for Henry IV, not for Gregory VII" (*Feudal Germany*, p. 138). You see, Thompson was a high authority on medieval Germany, and not one of the others had any authority on it. How far does that apply to the other forty points I examine in this book?

The full picturesque legend is taken from the chronicle of the monk Lambert, at which historians smile. It is based upon a letter (IV, 12) in which Gregory does claim that Henry "barefoot and in woollen [sic] robe spent three days before the door"; whether inner or outer door he does not say, and it is the monk who fills in the snow, etc. Thompson

says that Henry was warmly clad under his robe and was housed and fed in the castle; and that the long delay reflects, not the Pope's sternness but his nervousness and indecision. It seems to me likely that the cynical Henry, who defied the Pope more flagrantly than ever as soon as he left Canossa, did make a show of penitence in approaching the castle. But in the only specialist study of the subject Professor Dammann claims to have proved that Henry besieged the castle and forced the Pope to submit.

XV
The Plague of Monks

It is not certain that Gregory VII was, like Gregory I, a monk, but it is mainly in the light of the monastic ideal — the sacrifice of all the warm comforts of life for the aggrandizement of a "spiritual" power — that our historians give them such prominence and praise. This ideal is the opposite of our modern view of life, which, in spite of all our differences, is that the function of civilization is to provide all citizens with as much comfort and pleasure as is consistent with the health and progress of the race. It looks as if the new historians have here forgotten that they promised that theological considerations shall not be permitted to intrude into history.

But they offend far more grievously when, almost without exception, they give the readers the impression, indeed virtually say, that monasticism is, not merely in theory but in its historical record, entitled to our deep respect. You know what its fundamental principle is: the promise put into the mouth of Jesus in the gospels that for every sacrifice of pleasure you make in this world you will be repaid a hundred-fold for all eternity. Good business. But when Roman Catholics boast that their church alone inspires the strength of character in millions of individuals (in the past 1,500 years) to act logically in view of this promise, they assume that the monks not only entered their peculiar establishments but generally observed their vows. Protestant and other historians deny this. Our new historians, therefore, must either carefully weigh the evidence with scientific impartiality or leave monasticism out of the record. Instead of doing this they all deal with monasticism as one of the brighter features of the medieval world, and almost all completely ignore the evidence of its corruption and represent it just as the Roman Catholic writer does. One or two of them, it is true, mention "irregularities" but they say that we have no evidence of the proportion of the "irregular" monks to the whole, and they therefore represent — often at considerable length — monasticism as one of the virtues of the age of faith. This is entirely false. It is Roman Catholic propaganda.

Professor Langer says that "western monasticism represented a wide ascetic reaction against the current corruption of life." This jibe at

Roman life in the fourth century when monks first appeared in the west is not only not based upon historical evidence but contradicts the verdict of the two higher authorities, Friedlander and Dill. It is worse to describe the monks in Rome as ascetic rebukers of a general corruption. St. Jerome, who lived in Rome as secretary to the pope, gives us in his letters (especially 22 and 25) a scathing indictment of their moral character. He warns his half-dozen really ascetic lady-pupils to beware of them:

> Avoid the kind of men you see in chains, with long hair like women and beards like goats, with black cloaks and bare feet even in cold weather. They are all tricks of the devil. . . . They put on an air of sadness as if from long fasting, but they feed during the night. I should be ashamed to tell you the rest. (Ep. XXII).

Note that Jerome, who became a real monk, does not speak of individuals but of the body of monks, and all the testimonies of contemporaries that I quote are of that nature. It is the Roman Catholic writer, whom the new historian follows, who selects a few individuals and represents them as typical, while the critical writer, whom the new historian disdains, quotes general statements and gives us real history.

From Italy the monks spread to rich Roman Africa, and early in the fifth century St. Augustine, who had introduced them, describes them in *Of The Work of The Monks* as a plague of the Christian world. Thousands of slaves and peasants had donned the black robe, and they covered the country selling bogus relics and "demanding the fee of their lucrative poverty." Augustine is supposed to have reformed some of them, yet he orders his heads of monasteries to admit all applicants even if they "have only fled in idleness from a poor and laborious life," so the plague continued over the whole dilapidated empire.

A century after Augustine, strict monasteries were founded in Italy by Benedict; and in the famous rule he wrote for them he explains that it is because the country is covered with swarms of dissolute vagabond monks, just as Augustine described them. Cassianus, friend of Benedict, describes the monks as "a poisonous plant that had come into the church from Ananias and Sapphira," the arch-liar (in Migne Coll. XVIII. 7). Archbishop Isidore of Seville, the chief Christian leader of the seventh century, repeats the indictment of Jerome and Augustine, using their own language. From the very beginning of their introduction into the west the great majority of the monks were corrupt.

We know what to expect as the Dark Age sank lower. Only in Ireland and England was there for a time some real monasticism, but the Irish (married) monks were a peculiar variety, and of the English (as well as French and German) monasteries the leading reformer of the eighth century, St. Boniface, gives a sordid picture. Professor Barnes (p. 704) approvingly quotes this sentence of the French historian Goyaw: "At the beginning of the tenth century monastic life was almost universally characterized by a complete relaxation." Then came the famous reform of Cluny, which spread to a few score of monasteries and inspired fanatics like Hildebrand. It was established, says Professor Lucas, "to resist the pressure of feudalism on manners and morals." Which is a peculiarly polite way of saying that it was to prevent the vices of the feudal age from continuing to infect the monasteries. But how long did it last even in the "good" monasteries? Osborn, in his *Life of St. Dunstan*, gives contemporary evidence that by the middle of the tenth century only two monasteries in England were virtuous; but this sort of evidence is ignored and only the reform of Dunstan, which failed, is mentioned. Councils of bishops and chronicles are full of such indictments, a large number of which I quote in my *True Story of The Catholic Church*, with exact references. Gregory VII's chief lieutenant, Cardinal Damiani, gives us such a picture of the vices of monks (and clerics) in his time that we would not dare to publish a literal translation of it today (*The Book of Gomorrah*). Within thirty years of the death of the reforming pope we get weighty testimonies to the general corruption of the monasteries. Abelard says in his first letter to Heloise that "nearly all the monasteries" of France are corrupt. Ordericus Vitalis, the chief historian of the time and a monk, gives the same account. Rageard, a Roman Catholic, in his *History of Britanny*, sums up the details given by Ordericus and comes to the same conclusion. Cardinal Jacques de Vitry, of the same period, another historian, a monk of the latest reformed order, the Cistercians, says that not a convent in France, except a few of his own reform, was fit for a decent woman to live in. Heloise (abbess of a nunnery), says the same in her first letter to Abelard.

LIBER GOMORR

Every new order of monks that was established was a confession that the older orders had become corrupt, but this in turn was soon corrupted. The Franciscan friars were relaxed, as their official history tells, before Francis died, and the wealth they acquired led at once to the usual vices. Albert the Great, who had joined it, confesses that the Dominican order also was corrupted. The friars added tens of thousands to the number of idle sensualists at whom the writers of the

time scoffed. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* says that in the year 1300 there were 37,000 monasteries of one single order in Europe; that is to say, apart from Russia, which belonged to the Greek church, and Spain, which was still for the most part under the Arabs. Thus there must have been at least 60,000 monasteries and more than a million monks in Europe. And as after 1300 the papacy itself entered upon the 300-year (with short interludes) degradation of the long stay in Avignon, the Great Schism, and then the Roman Renaissance, we knew what to expect.

When, in fact, the Vatican was driven, reluctantly, to convoke the Council of Trent to reform the clergy, in face of the rebellion of half of Europe, one of the loudest demands of the few real reformers was for the suppression of all orders of monks. German bishops made stern general indictments of their corruption in that country. A few Italian cardinals and three popes (in 300 years) who were themselves ascetic in life scarified the monasteries and convents of Italy. Huguenot writers described them in France, and we have in contemporary documents (proceedings of the London ecclesiastical court, reports of councils in Wilkins, etc.) extraordinary pictures of vice in English monasteries.

But the "Reformation" made no difference to their condition in Roman Catholic countries. The puritan bishop Ricci gives us amazing pictures of the life of monks in Italy in the eighteenth century, and I have extensively quoted from a work by two Spanish scholars on the monks of Latin America which indicate an astonishing freedom. And it continued. Even for the beginning of the present century I found and quoted ample evidence of corruption in Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and South American monasteries, and it is little more then ten years since several hundred German monks were jailed for sodomy and seduction after strict trial in Roman Catholic cities. Here I can only give specimens of the general indictments of monasticism which I have quoted in earlier works. But I have said enough to show that this respectful treatment of monasticism as a whole by the new historians is one of the most comprehensive lies they have derived from their Roman Catholic sources.)

XVI
The Crusades

Some of our new historians find here a gorgeous opportunity to praise the piety, the loyalty to their faith, and the self-sacrificing spirit of Europe just when we speak of the Dark Age slowly merging into the later part of the Middle Ages. The Cluniac reform of the monasteries, the Ottonian Renaissance, and the fiery campaign of Gregory VII and Cardinal Damiani had deepened the devotion of all classes, they say, and they longed more than ever to follow the devout custom of making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. But the Turks, who now held it, were worse than the Arabs and by torture and spoliation virtually closed it against Christians. So Pope Urban II announced that he would address a vast and cosmopolitan body of knights at Clermont in 1095, and, stirred to the depths of their pious souls by his eloquence, they fell on their knees and roared "God wills it." The road to the East was already indicated by a hundred thousand graves of children and peasants, whom stupid fanatics — Rome and the clergy permitting — had driven into the death trap. Now the united chivalry of Europe, their sins confessed and their shields marked with a red cross, took the long road to Constantinople and Jerusalem.

So much work has been done on the Crusades in recent times by serious scholars that some of the new historians, like Langer and Barnes, not only refuse to tell this old fairy tale but dismiss the whole subject briefly. Professor Thompson strips the tinsel from the story by pointing out that in point of fact the Turks were quite willing to allow Christian pilgrimages; that the atrocity-stories with which the Pope appealed to the hot blood of the knights were bogus; that Urban mainly wanted to bring the Greek church under his rule; that at the back of his plan was the landless Norman prince Bohemund who wanted a principality in the rich east; that in short, the motives of the Crusades were as mixed as the types of characters amongst them. But even this is not the full truth. Urban II is thus portrayed by the distinguished historian Gregorovius (IV, 277):

> Urban II, aged, oppressed, owing the possession of the papal residence to the gold of a foreign abbot, seated in the deserted

> Lateran surrounded by rude partisans, and no less rude bishops, gazing upon the ruins of churches and streets — memories of Gregory VII — and in a city silent as death, squalid, and inhabited by a tattered, murderous, and miserable population, presents a gloomy picture of the decadence of the papacy.

This was less than ten years after the death of Gregory VII, the pope whose "great" works of reform occupy several flattering pages in the new history; and this is altogether silent about the fact that just at this time there was a very fine Arab civilization in Sicily. Urban was a monk of the Gregory VII type except that he was a French noble instead of a rough Italian peasant, and at his accession he looked round at once for means to bring back to the beggared papacy the wealth and power that Gregory's scheming had lost. His first measures (not mentioned in the new history) are pronounced revolting by our highest authorities — see them in the *Cambridge Medieval History* (V. 146), Gregorovius, etc., — but the vast gathering of priests and people in Italy which endorsed these measures for him refused to listen to his suggestion of a Crusade, and the "saintly pontiff" went to France to stir up the passions and greed of the fierce and unscrupulous knights and princes of France.

The true, undisputed (by experts) character of these pioneers of the "Age of Chivalry" I will consider presently. Hardly one in ten even of their leaders had a religious motive. As the *Cambridge Medieval History* says (IV. 335): "They were intent solely on their private interests . . . that of carving out principalities for themselves." As in fact they did. In one of the best works on the Crusades, *The Crusades* (1894), Archer and Kingsford (both specialists) say that "of only a few of the Crusades can we predicate absolute purity of motive" (p. 446). The *Encyclopedia Americana* entrusted this purely historical subject to a medical man — but a zealous Roman Catholic apologist — Dr. Walsh. Yet he admits that the common soldiers just sought relief from the burdens and mischief of the feudal system at home; and in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* we are assured that "famine and pestilence drove men to emigrate hopefully to the Golden East." Professors Sheppard and Godfrey say (I. 256):

> (Contemporary writers complained that most of the crusaders went from motives of curiosity or to escape the rigors of extreme poverty or the just punishment of their crimes, or to find escape from the menacing threats of those to whom they were financially indebted.)

But they sweep aside this contemporary testimony and, without authority, assure their readers that the predominant motive was piety. The callousness and cruelty with which the soldiers sought loot do not evince piety; but these, though undisputed, have no place in the new history. Nor do the new historians tell that the Arab cities were incomparably richer than those of Europe, and thus the obvious motive is concealed.

In the contemporary Norman historian Ordericus I found a page that is not quoted by any modern historian, yet is most illuminating. The duke of Aquitaine, one of the richest and most erotic nobles in France, did not take the cross even under pressure from the Pope, who spent a few pleasant days in his gay castle. But when the first reports of rich loot came from the Crusaders in Syria, he wiped the nude portait of his favorite mistress off his shield, had the red cross painted on it, and, with a few other giddy dukes and countesses, set out at the head of 100,000 men for the "Holy City." The translation of Ordericus tells you that they were accompanied by a "great crowd of pilgrims." What Ordericus really says is "swarms of girls"; and they certainly were not Children of Mary. Few returned alive. Duke William got home wtih empty pockets, and was more blasphemous and obscene than ever. It is said Pope Urban had dispensed him from going on condition that he built an abbey. On his return he did build an abbey, for women. All the women were choice prostitutes dressed as nuns, and their litanies, etc., were blasphemous and obscene.

The general truth about the Crusades is now so firmly established that some of our historians are content to say that, however mixed the motive of the company, the Crusades greatly helped in the civilization of Europe. The greatly inferior culture of the West had come into contact with the superior culture of the East, say Sheppard and Godfrey (II,1) and most others. This was the argument invented by the apologist when the true character of the Crusades was realized. We shall see that the finest historical scholar of the group, Professor Haskins, disdainfully rejects this argument. The recovery had begun *before* the first Crusade started — and in fact comparatively few returned, and there is no evidence that those few rose to a higher level. It was contact with the Arabs of Spain, especially the peddling of Arab art by the Jews all over Europe, which is suppressed in the new history, that roused Europe from its slumbers. But before we discuss this we must examine the real character of the knights and their chivalry, about which the new history is comprehensively and profoundly unsatisfactory.

XVII
The Age of Chivalry

While some of our historians do, like Professor Thompson, strip some of the gilt off the Crusades, I do not find a single one of them who dares to rebuke the myth of the age of chivalry, yet it is not only completely discredited, but one of the chief grounds for believing in the noble spirits of the Crusaders. Professor Barnes does say that "Knightly morality is largely mythical," but he goes on to say, quite wrongly, that in the course of time the church "transformed chivalry." Most of them just give the conventional or Roman Cathoic myth as it was forged by two French sycophants of the nobility in the seventeenth century. The aspirant spent the night before his initiation in prayer and fasting before the altar, and next morning he vowed, during mass and the consecration of his arms, to raise his lance always for the church, the weak, and the honor of womanhood. Professor Thompson is almost lyrical about it. He says (p. 711):

> As the Roman Catholic church lifted marriage and kingship until the relation became a sacrament, so she made what was practically another sacrament of the relationship between vassal and lord. She took the feudal fighting man, defined his mission in the social order, consecrated his old pagan virtues to serve a new and Christianized ideal of a state of life to which his maker had called him. . . . There is something akin to Franciscanism in chivalry.

After this amazing effusion from the leading representative of the new history we know what to expect. Professor Langer, I am glad to say, hardly mentions the myth, but the other manuals I have listed endorse it in various degrees of favor. Professor Geise says (I. 439): "In spite of its limitations chivalry introduced into medieval society a higher standard of honor, a more gentle attitude toward life, greater generosity and reverence toward both the church and womanhood." Professor Perkins says (p. 140): "The medieval clergy insisted that the knight should be a manly Christian and should respect and defend the church, should fight against heathen and heretics, and should protect the needy and

those in distress." Professor Lucas writes that "the Knight was required to spend a night in prayer in the church and attend mass and listen to a sermon." Professors Boak, Slosson, and Anderson think that "chivalry was a great advance upon the untamed rudeness of barbarism" (p. 190), and Professor Barnes, admitting that the outstanding ideal of chivalry was physical bravery, not intelligence or graciousness, adds, as I said, that the church "transformed" the brutes and made them protectors of widows and orphans. With all these manuals to draw upon, the writer (unnamed, but apparently Roman Catholic) on chivalry in the *Encyclopedia Americana* assures the public that the knights had a lofty devotion to the female sex, and a "refined gallantry," in addition to their service to the church. And the authors it vaguely quotes in support are chiefly Froissart's *Chronicle* (in which there is no chivalry but plenty of the reverse), the modern writers Gautier and Henne, who show better than any others what a grotesque travesty of the facts this supposed reverence of womanhood is.

For this myth of chivalry, which is thus quoted by almost all the new historians as one of the brighter features in their glorification of the Middle Ages, is in all its details one of the most audacious historical lies of Roman Catholic literature. When we complain that our historians delude their readers by representing monasticism as repectable and an element in the civilization of Europe, they (or some of them) reply that they are aware that there are corrupt monasteries, but no historian has, or could have, worked out the proportion of these to the whole number. But in the case of the age of chivalry it is not a question of "a few bad knights." Not one in 100,000 had a priestly consecration or listened to the church. Habitually in their looting operations they plundered monasteries and nunneries and savagely tortured — in some cases it was lady-leaders of gangs of knights — monks or nuns who hid the church treasures. The knight errant is as mythical as the maid who trembled for her virtue; for it is one of the outstanding features of the period that both men and women (young or married) above the level of the common people were more aggressively sexual than in any other civilized period. Noble daughters fought their mothers for the pleasure of sleeping with the knight they entertained. And the second chief characteristic of the knights, ladies, and princes was that they had a profound contempt of and were cruel and unjust to all — burghers as well as peasants — below their own rank.

Our encyclopedias had to employ romantic writers, not historians, to write the articles on this important subject. The old *Britannica* engaged Sir W. Besant, though even his article is removed from the new Roman

Catholic-influenced edition in favor of a scrappy note. The article in the *Americana* is, as I said, anonymous and almost impudently mendacious. The *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, to which we are entitled to look for the truth, engaged the romantic writer Cornish to praise the knights, yet in his own work (*Chivalry*, 1911) he says: "The heroes of the first Crusade were no exception to the rule of fierceness and even ferocity with which we are familiar in the history of the Norman Knights." Another romantic writer on it, J. Batty (*The Spirit and Influence of Chivalry*, 1890), says, (p. 135): "History tells us that from the end of the eleventh to the commencement of the fifteenth century . . . crime was never so rife, honor was never so disregarded, nor war conducted so brutally." And he gives a realistic sketch of the tournament as it was — most of the knights were professionals, fighting for gain — not as ladywriters describe it, that would make a Chicago slaughter-man turn up his nose.

As their sources these writers quote Froissart (and, as I said, there is no chivalry in the pages of that bloody-minded priest and he does not even describe events in the age of chivalry), Monstrelet (a French writer of fiction), the life of the Cid (a completely unscrupulous and cruel soldier of fortune), and the *Morte D'Arthur* (a poem composed long after the close of the period). The "heroes of chivalry" whom they offer to our admiration were in no case chivalrous (in the above sense). Bayard did not live in the age of chivalry (1100-1400). The Cid is a traitor and torturer in real history. Richard the Lion Hearted is described in the authoritative *British Dictionary of National Biography* as "a splendid savage in a semi-savage age." Bertrand du Guesclin is described in the French *Grande Encyclopedie* as a brutal soldier all his life. They sometimes quote the French historian Guizot, who in his classic *History of European Civilization* gives the ideal of chivalry, but he goes on to call it "a beautiful chimera" (p. 114): "The epoch which occupies us is beyond question one of the most brutal, one of the rawest, in history; one of these in which we meet with the greatest amount of crime and violence." Guizot sends us to the fourteenth century bishop John of Salisbury, the most respected prelate of his time and a man who knew both French and English nobility well. It is he who describes the knight's vigil and consecration, but he adds that the custom is "not observed by many," and he underlines this by deploring at the same length as he describes their vices that the Christian knights are degenerate in comparison with the soldiers of ancient Rome (*Policraticus*, book IV).

We know these knights and nobles and their "ladies" from two classes of medieval literature: the chronicles and the lighter literature (sto-

ries and poetry) of the time. I will hazard the opinion that none of the new historians have read — in most cases could not read — any works of either class. Having for many years been exasperated by the evergreen freshness of the myth, I have studied the sources extensively but it will be best to quote the accredited specialist historians on those three centuries in the leading countries of Europe. All of them describe the knights, nobles, princes and ladies as I have described them. Why American historians do not take their information from these masters of history, whose work s are based upon the original documents, or on what sources the new historians *do* base their statements, which are the exact opposite of the truth, I do not know. General bibliographies at the end of each chapter or at the end of each book give no indication or actually mislead. However, I must be content to give a few short quotations.

For English the chief authorities, Freeman, Grene, the *Cambridge Medieval History*, and Traile's *Social England* entirely agree. Freeman's classic work, *The Norman Conquest*, gives a record of tortures used by the Norman knights and nobles, and even kings, in their greedy hunt for hidden treasures — smearing nuns with honey and exposing them nude to insects, etc. — is horrible. In the *Cambridge History* (V, 593) Professor Halphin says:

> *Everywhere* the barons perpetrated the same excesses, and these usually consisted, not only of robbing merchants and pilgrims, but also in fleecing the peasants, in seizing their wine, corn and cattle, and in pillaging the property of the churches and abbeys.

In Traile's *Social England* (I, 556), Professor Medley says:

> The gallantry which we are accustomed to associate with the feudal age was only skin deep, and the brutality of husbands to wives and of men to women quite disabuses us of our notions of medieval chivalry.

If, he says, a knight did meet an unprotected maid on the road, he would rape her; but we shall see in a moment that coy maids were in those days as rare as chivalrous knights. J. F. Rowbotham, an authority on the Courts of Love (free love) says of their development in England, where Queen Eleanor often presided at them: "Immorality was fostered as it had rarely been before or since by this exceeding freedom of in-

tercourse." Even the priest Lingard, whose 14-volume *History of England* (1823-31) is the best historical work yet written by a Roman Catholic in England or America, says: "These Christian knights gloried in barbarities which would have disgraced their pagan forefathers." It is amusing that Hilaire Belloc, who considers himself Lingard's successor, carefully avoids the subject. In the third volume of his *History of England* he observes that "the savage wars of the fourteenth century" — and it is just those wars that are the subject of Froissart's *Chronicle* — "destroyed the chivalry of the past"; but if you turn back to the second volume for this "chivalry of the past" you find that he has forgotten to mention it.

Most folk think of France as the classic land of chivalry, especially in the thirteenth century, that golden age of piety and knightly virtue. Fortunately, one of the more distinguished of French historians, Professor Luchaire, has given us a work (*Social France at the Time of Philip Augustus*, 1912), which shows how violently opposed to the truth the myth is. Of the relation of the knight or noble to his inferiors which, according to Professor Thompson, the church raised to the level of a sacrament, this highest authority says:

> Feudalism seemed to take a ferocious delight in seeing flames consume burghers' houses and the villeins (commoners) who resided in them (p. 5). Concerning feudalism as a whole, with the exception of a select few, the habits and customs of the nobles had not changed since the eleventh century. *Almost everywhere* the castellan (provincial knight) remained a brutal and pillaging soldier (p. 249).
>
> The great barons and the feudal sovereigns stole. . . . Some were veritable beasts (p. 251).
>
> The noble had an untameable antipathy to a profound contempt of the villein; that is to say, the serf, peasant, laborer, citizen, or burgher (p. 271).

Levisse's *History of France*, though too candid to be translated into English, holds the same high position for that country as the *Cambridge History* does in Britain. Professor Luchaire writes the third volume of it and repeats his indictment. Of the wives of these knights and barons, the gentle and chaste matrons of the romantic writer, he says: "The chatelaine, whom history and poetry describe in the eleventh century as *almost always* a virago of violent character." Or as he says in his book:

> In the *majority of cases* the lady of the manor in the time of Philip Augustus was still what she had been in the centuries preceding feudalism: a virago of violent temperament, of strong passions, trained from infancy in all physical exercises, sharing the dangers and pleasures of the knights of their circle. (p. 351).

Some of the vilest women in history, in comparison with whom Lucretia Borgia and Messalina were angels — for these French women, though of the highest nobility, added fiendish cruelty and treachery to sex — are found in the French chronicles of the period. In the poetry and stories of the time, which some of our historians highly praise, there are, if possible, even more. The classic authority on this literature, the French Roman Catholic Leon Gautier, nearly goes into hysterics when he describes the women:

> It is their blood, the blood that boils in their veins, that rules them. . . . At first sight of a young man they throw themselves at his feet without hesitation, modesty, or struggle, and beg him to satisfy the brutality of their desires. . . . If one resists their pursuing attentions, they take advantage of the night and place themselves in the bed of the man they desire. . . . Married women do almost the same, though there are, it seems, brilliant and admirable exceptions.

These are the real women whom our historians almost uniformly describe as deeply-reverenced by the knights and a rebuke to modern girls and women. Note particularly that while Gautier finds exceptions among the married women but not among the unmarried girls, Luchaire has a chapter on these exceptions, the select few (or "elite class"), and explains that he means that, like Queen Eleanor, they were more refined but equally free in love. The authority on the German women of the age of the Minnesingers (troubadours) says just the same as Gautier. Prof. K. Weingold (*Die Deutschen Frauen in Mittelalter* — not translated, of course — p. 179, 399, etc.) says:

> Women no longer distinguished between men of quality and shameless scoundrels; indeed they give their love by preference to the cunning, the coarse, and the more brutal, and many offer their love for money. Conjugal fidelity becomes a joke; lusty adultery and frivolous vice were praised or smiled upon in countless

> short poems. Both sexes wore the same dress, and shameless figures were used to decorate the tables.

These were the real women of the Middle Ages. All the authorities on the epics, lyrics, etc., tell the same. From the historical point of view Professor the Right Honorable H. A. L. Fisher gives the same account of the men in his *Medieval Empire* (2 vols., 1898, p. 342):

> The German nobility possessed, in fact, a perfect genius for disobedience and treachery. . . . Restrained by no consideration of patriotism, softened by no tincture of culture, swayed by rudimentary passions, simple, violent and gross, they would neglect all the higher calls of citizenship to serve their greedy ends. The thickest strand of their existence was woven of cruelty, perfidy and vice.

Giesebrecht and other German historians agree. But what about Professor Thompson, who was a high authority on medieval Germany? We saw that this compelled him to differ entirely from his colleagues in regard to Canossa, yet, as I have quoted, he surprises them all in his praise of chivalry. But look up the learned 700-page book in which he gives what the contemporaries really say about the German knights! There is here no mention of chivalry. "The nobles like a pack of wolves fed upon the carcass of the church and state" he notes in his (*Feudal Germany*, p. 233). For two centuries, to 1172, including the time when they "reformed the papacy" they acted thus. And Professor Thompson quotes one Italian writer after another who inveighed against their brutality, violence and spoliation. Several of their commanders were bishops and abbots, yet they were of the same violent and sensual character.

XVIII
The Guilds

Among the features by which we recognize that the face of Europe is brightening in the latter part of the eleventh century and early part of the twelfth are three that are far more interesting to the modern mind than the reform of a few dozen monasteries, the multiplication of episcopal and monastic schools for the clergy, and the progress of architecture. These are the emancipation of the serfs, the emancipation of the towns from episcopal control, and the organization of the urban workers in guilds. As the first two of these changes are generally admitted by the new historians to have been due to economic causes I need not consider them here. Partially in order to buy the new imported luxuries from Spain and the East, and still more in order to get funds for the voyages to the East, for the Italian shippers and the Greeks made them pay through the nose, the noble landowners over large areas sold their freedom to the serfs. For military service also a serf could buy emancipation and a city buy a charter. . . . But there is little to criticize on these points. The processes were secular.

But as every historian knows, Roman Catholic writers cling, in spite of the plain evidence, to the idea that the organization of the guilds was the work of the church. Our main quarrel with the new historians here is that they suppress the truth, that the church bitterly opposed the guilds or unions of workers for a century or more and only took them over to some extent when they could not be suppressed; which suggests that they were, in fact, survivals of the colleges or unions of the ancient Roman and Greek workers. This derivation of the guilds is arbitrarily denied or concealed in the new history by what purports to be one of its discoveries. Before the guilds of workers were formed, it is said, there were guilds of merchants, such as the Hansa of North Germany, and these seem to have started the idea.

The truth, of which it is charitable to suppose that they are ignorant, is that the Roman "colleges" (which few of them mention in their account of ancient Rome) are easily traced surviving in the wreck of the empire. In Eginhard's description of the reception of Charlemagne at Rome in the year A.D.774 the procession is said to have included the "schools of the workers." The *Cambridge Medieval History*, the nine

large volumes of which are far superior to anything published on the Middle Ages in America, as each separate chapter is written by an expert on that subject or period, says (V, 299) that in the time of the Lombards there were in the chief towns "traces of ancient trade corporations still subsisting." In Piacenza there was a union of 744 soapmakers; which will give you some idea of the size and quality of the Lombard civilization, for there was little soap anywhere else in Europe.

But the chief fault is that none of these historians say a word about the treatment of the guilds (expressly named guilds or gildoniae) in the Capitularies (decisions of councils) of Charlemagne of the eighth and early ninth centuries. These councils of bishops and nobles over which Charlemagne presided took up the matter in the year A.D.779 and sternly forbade the workers to "conspire together in guilds." The prohibition was repeated time after time, and they were declared to be pagan, especially as, the decrees say, the priests attended their periodical suppers (just like those of the old Roman "colleges") and got drunk and sang ribald songs. Most of Charlemagne's work, we saw, went to pieces at his death, but we find the church synod of Nantes in the year 852 still scourging the priests for attending the drunken suppers of the guilds. Thus we see these guilds of the urban workers flourishing long before there were any unions of merchant-shippers: but even writers on the guilds suppress or distort the hostility of the church to them. So completely are these facts suppressed that even Professor Barnes says that there is a hiatus of about 800 years between the Roman and the medieval guilds. On the other hand, there are historians of art who hold that it was from the surviving guilds of masons in north Italy that the Germans got the men to build their Romanesque cathedrals.

XIX
The Recovery of Europe

We have now, at least by the year 1100, reached the end of the Dark Age. That phrase does not, and never did, indicate a chronological division of European history. It is a characterization of the first part of the Middle Ages, and you can no more give precise dates for it than you can say at what hour on a particular date the night ends and the day begins. But approximate dates are required. I prefer about A.D.450 to 1050: others A.D.500 to 1100. I have devoted a dozen of these sections to different aspects of that period, and the reader knows what to think of the historians who repeat the Roman Catholic cry that there never was a Dark Age. No one ever said that it was uniformly dark, remember.

In the second half of the eleventh century the light was slowly spreading over Europe from the south. I ignore the "Ottonian Renaissance" in Germany and the reform of many of the abbeys because, as I have just shown, the flower of the German nobility for 150 years after the death of the last Otto behaved in Italy with a barbarity at least equal to that of the Goths and Huns. Brighter markets and schools were spreading over France from the Spanish frontier and were multiplying in the cities and ports of north Italy for some time before the year 1100. Fifty years ago I published a book in Britain and America (Putnam), a biography of Peter Abelard; and, as the Roman Catholic church did not at that time overshadow the American educational world, it was much used in the universities. In this I described how, early in the twelfth century, Abelard became a wandering scholar like thousands of others, and founded a string of schools from Brittany to Paris. From the social-historical point of view it is most interesting to determine the real agencies that were reawakening Europe.

Here it will almost be enough to examine the *Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (1929) of Prof. C. H. Haskins, of Harvard, as the new historians mainly rely on this and his more learned earlier work *Studies in the History of Medieval Science* (1924) for their view of the regenerating agencies. But while we recognize the valuable research that Professor Haskins has given us in the second work, he opens the first with the usual misrepresentation of the "old" history. The very title

of the book, he says, will astonish many folk, "even some who ought to know better." A renaissance (awakening) of Europe in the twelfth century! But surely, he imagines them saying all through the Middle Ages Europe was uniform, static, and unprogressive." "The Dark Ages," he says, "is extended to cover all that came between, let us say, A.D.476 and 1453."

I have already explained that no historian ever extended the Dark Age beyond the year 1100. If Professor Haskins refers to Draper's *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, this able work was published more than a century ago and is no longer in circulation, but what is more important, it does not divide the history of Europe into a Dark Age and later Middle Ages but into an Age of Faith, which may justly be extended to the fifteenth century and the Age of Reason. He mentions Gibbon, but only to grant that Gibbon admits that the Middle Ages were not a uniformly unprogressive period. The only writer he quotes as making or implying that statement is John Addington Symonds. Yet that distinguished writer's classical work, *The Renaissance in Italy* (5 vols., 1873, and practically out of circulation fifty years ago), explains at length in the first chapter that he does not hold the view which Haskins criticizes. "To deprecate the work achieved for humanity during the Middle Ages would be ridiculous" he says (I. 7). And the passage quoted in which he refers to St. Bernard concerns only the appreciation of beauty, with which Professor Haskins does not deal. "Men had not seen the beauty of the world," he says. If Professor Haskins complains that Symonds thinks little of the Scholastic movement when he calls the earlier Middle Ages "intellectually barren and inert" a good many of even our philosophers would agree with Symonds.

After this introduction we expect the learned Harvard professor of history to discover features of the twelfth century which will justify his statement that his book will astonish us and rebuke our ignorance. He does not. In history, as in science, though on a much smaller scale, we make discoveries of detail every year, and Professor Haskins has made valuable contributions in this sense, chiefly in connection with the revival of science in the Middle Ages, to which I return in the next section. These, however, no more correct our general estimates of life in the Middle Ages than do the discoveries of Professor Thompson and his collaborators in regard to schools and libraries in the Dark Age, as we saw. Three of his dozen chapters cover the same ground (books, libraries, schools, and scholars) as Professor Thompson does, and they call for no further comment.

In his introduction Professor Haskins conveniently lists for us the features or advances of the twelfth century which, he suggests, have been overlooked or underestimated. These are: the Crusades (the only new thing about which, their painfully human character, I have given — and he does not), the culmination of the Romanesque architecture and beginning of the Gothic (which certainly no one ever overlooked or underestimated), the development of the vernacular languages (again, fully recognized), the recovery of the Latin and Greek classics (also well known and there was very little of it in the twelfth century), progress in the study and improvement of law (same), the translation of Arabic and Greek works (which is precisely part of our theory of the recovery of Europe, as we shall see in a moment), the expansion of trade (certainly never underestimated), the revival of philosophy (of a kind — as is equally well known), the beginning of the universities (a platitude of history), and the increase of history-writing (which means that twice as many people learned to write and to tell lies on parchment, though, as he says, "relatively few could read").

No student of history will admit that any one of these features had hitherto been inadequately treated in history (for instance, in the *Cambridge Medieval History*), and no additional details given by Professor Haskins make any of these features more important than we had thought them. Most of the new details refer, like those of Professor Thompson, to schools, books, and scholars, and do not carry us any further. The brilliance of Abelard and the learning of John of Salisbury were always recognized, and if there was, as Gibbon recognized more than 150 years ago, some increase of "the ardor of student curiosity," it was to be expected in an age of rapidly-growing urban population and increase of the middle class (officials, teachers, physicians, lawyers, etc.). All the rest, even the artistic advance, depends on the rapid growth of trade and wealth and imports from higher civilizations outside Christendom. A quarter of a century before the appearance of Professor Haskins' book, I gave a full account in my *Peter Abelard* (1901) of the quickening of intellectual life by the year 1200. It is traced still earlier in Palustre's *Life of Duke William of Aquitaine* (prince-troubadour of whom I spoke in the last section), a work published in France in 1882 that is too little considered by historians.

One might, in fact, complain that Professor Haskins himself ignores features of the twelfth century which it is essential to bear in mind if you want to form a true picture of it. Three of the Crusades occurred during or just on the threshold of it, and it is the first of the three centuries of the Age of Chivalry. We saw in what lurid light these show the character

of the knights and nobles and their families, yet Professor Haskins, like all the new historians, shirks the question of the general standard of character. The illiterate and brutally-treated workers (as we saw) are not likely to have been more virtuous than the knights and the monks and clergy. Professor Haskins says a good deal about Abelard as one of the most brilliant figures of the times, but he does not give a hint that the details of his life bring out the lingering brutality of his age. Abelard was, as most folk know, castrated by the servants of a canon of the Paris cathedral, but few know that he tells us that French law gave him the right to have the canon publicly castrated (as was the law all over Europe); and there is no mention of the general corruption of the monasteries and convents which Abelard and Heloise describe.

The democratic movement which had a splendid success in the cities of Italy and Rome in the twelfth century until pope and emperor brutally suppressed it is dismissed in a paragraph; and its noble leader, Arnold of Brescia, one of the highest moral characters of the century, receives one line, with no reference to the savagery of his execution by the pope. These things are more important to the modern mind than the number of monks and priests who could write chronicles or Latin poems. Another development of the century of the greatest importance is that it opened with a large number of independent schools or colleges, some even for women, under lay teachers, and the growth of this movement would greatly have accelerated the development of civilization, but the church crushed these schools and turned education into a sterile discussion of theology. We read little about this in Professor Haskins. Most important of all, he most inadequately deals with the question of the *causes* of the recovery. We always knew that Europe was awakened from its medieval torpor in the twelfth century, or from about 1050 onwards. It is more important to know *who* awakened it. On the whole the reader of the book is left free to entertain the claim that the Roman church created modern civilization.

XX
The Causes of The Recovery

We are indebted to the professor for introducing, though he does not sufficiently enlarge upon the matter, two points in this connection which correct the other new historians. He agrees that the Crusades were not an important factor in the advance of Christendom. The recovery began — in fact it was well under way — before the first Crusade. The second point is that he repeatedly notices Moslem influence in the advance of Europe and refers particularly to the influence of the Moslem civilization in Spain. This we should expect, as Professor Haskins has given us in his *Studies in the History of Medieval Science* (1924) a valuable account (completely ignored by the great majority of his colleagues) of the Christian students who, like Pope Sylvester II, went on to study in the Arab colleges of Cordova. But he does not merely fail to give his readers a full and systematic study of this influence. He persists in speaking of "Moslem" culture when it was mainly due to the skeptical Arabs and was chiefly conveyed to Christendom by Jews.

He, in effect, makes short work of the glorification of the "Ottonian Renaissance" and the other historians when he says that in the twelfth century the German culture showed little vitality and the advance was most marked in France (at first in the southeast), and north and south (but not in central) Italy. As the Normans, for all their brutality and sexual perversity, introduced the higher culture into England from France, and Spain was still for the most part under the Arabs, this is significant enough. He admits, as he must, that the first three universities were, in this order, Salerno, Montpelier, and Bologna. The first, in south Italy, on the fringe of the sphere of influence of the Arab civilization in Sicily (of which, by the way, he has a most inadequate idea), admittedly grew out of an Arab-Jewish medical school. The second was in southeastern France and developed also from an important Arab-Jewish medical school. Both of them became universities of Arab-Persian science. Bologna, which developed from a law school, represents the old Lombard culture, which was never lost in north Italy, quickened by Arab influence. Even at Oxford, which became famous much later, the chief college from our modern angle

was that of Arab science, in which Roger Bacon learned his first lessons. The fame of the school at Paris was mainly due to Abelard, who, though he was little interested in science, had great respect for Arab culture. He named his son, not after a saint, but Astrolabe, after an Arab astronomical instrument; and in his deepest suffering he thought, he says, of going to live in Arab Spain.

But it is misleading to confine ourselves, as Professor Haskins does, to science and philosophy: especially as this was by no means the whole range of Arab culture. Professor Haskins has great praise of a sort for the encyclopedic work of Isidore of Saville of the eighth century. It preserves a few pieces of the less important material of ancient science in a jelly of credulity, and it is as far removed as possible from the real scientific spirit. Other of our new historians praise it as uncritically as the most ignorant Roman Catholic apologist does; and not one of them knows that in the Arab world 50-volume encyclopedias were written and hundreds of authors wrote hundreds of books each on three or four branches of science as well as history. Professor Haskins goes out of his way to belittle the learning of the Spanish Arabs, and suggests that more critical research will discredit conventional accounts of Cordova with its 600 mosques and its libraries of 600,000 volumes. He ought to know that what we say today about Arab Spain is taken from a group of Spanish professors (Ribera, Cordera, Ballisteros, etc.) who in the liberal period of half a century ago read Arabic and critically sifted the piles of Arabic manuscripts that lay in the dust of old Roman Catholic libraries. He carefully explains the labor of copying books in the Middle Ages, so that (as Professor Thompson says) it was a high figure for a zealous abbey to turn out 100 to 200 books a year. But he does not tell, and clearly does not know, that the highest authority, Ribera, carefully estimated that Cordova alone could, for several centuries, turn out, beautifully written on paper and as a rule finely bound, 70,000 to 80,000 books a year, and ten other cities were not far behind it. One city, Xativa, lived mainly on its paper-mills, while its monks washed out classical works to get parchment to write their miserable stuff. Yet, since S. P. Scott published his three volume *Moorish Empire in Europe* half a century ago no American writer has attempted to tell the world about this brilliant civilization, while all the new historians glorify the copying monks and their wretched little libraries.

Great as Arab-Persian learning was in science (botany, natural history, medicine, surgery, chemistry, and geography, as well as physics and astronomy), history, biography, philosophy, and literature, and although Cordova — a city of a million people when Rome had

some 20,000 — welcomed Christian students from the north to its hundreds of colleges, its transmission of culture to Christendom through Barcelona (as we saw) was not the chief service of the Arabs. In fact Christendom was refractory to its culture and had first to be won by its more natural attractions. The Spaniards under the Arab rulers — most of the population were still Christians with large bodies of Jews and Moroccans (or Moors) — learned a general appreciation of beauty in all things (from domestic articles to dress and superb gardens), poetry, music, cleanliness, etc., that in its spread to every class was far higher than in any ancient or modern civilization. In the year 1000, when Europe had sunk so low that large numbers expected the end of the world, Cordova had 80,455 stores and 4,300 markets. These were filled with beautiful objects (in metal, leather, etc.) not only from all Arab-Spain, but all parts of the Arab-Persian empire; and this wealth of luxuries, at a time when washable linen and carpets were rare in Christendom, had begun by the year 800 and lasted until after 1200, when the Christian "crusaders," as greedy for loot as those of Syria — they destroyed the enormous stores of books and most of the superb buildings — began to advance south. Could anybody doubt the influence on the rest of Europe of this splendid civilization?

Our new historians make it easier for their readers who happen to know the truth about Spain — and there was a smaller but equally brilliant Arab culture in Sicily — to imagine that some Iron Curtain separated the world of Christ and that of Mohammed by completely suppressing the services of the Jews in the restoration of civilization. It is to me amazing that the Jews of America have never met their anti-Semitic opponents with a full account of their fine record in Arab-Spain and Sicily and the very important part they played as pedlars of the Arab culture in the semibarbaric countries of the north. Into these bleak regions the comfortable Arab did not care to venture, but through Barcelona, which was officially Christian but full of Arab culture and liberality, the Jews, in spite of the vile treatment they often suffered, spread over France, England, and Germany with the treasures of Spain; musical and scientific instruments, superb steel (the Toledo blade of the novelist) damascened (Damascus) armor, Cordovan leather-work, brocades, silks, velvets, linen, etc. Literary historians recognize Arab origin in the beginning of the troubadour movement in the south of France (which reached Paris by 1200); but I do not know any historian who tells how the tilting with lances in the arena was borrowed from Spain, where it was a bloodless display of horsemanship, and turned it to chivalrous savagery in Christian Europe. By the

ninth century Jewish merchants from Arab Spain traveled from France as far as China, dropping the seeds of civilization as they went (*Cambridge Medieval History VI.* 478). You will find no justice even to the Jew in the new history.

It is always dangerous, though tempting, to trace a large set of phenomena to a single cause. I do not attempt that. There were other causes, such as the inherent impulse of a nation to rise in the economic scale, the Lombard culture, and to a small extent the relatively higher culture of the Greeks, at work in the recovery of Europe. But the cradles of the permanent recovery, southern France and north and south (omitting Rome) Italy, studied in conjunction with the Arab culture and the mercantile activities of the Jews, show us the preponderant cause. Most of our new historians ignore it; none of them do justice to it; and the Roman Catholic apologist continues to allege that his church created modern civilization.

XXI
The Influence of The Arabs

As happened in all periods of reaction in history — and, as Dean Inge says, the European Dark Age was the longest and most dismal of them all — the economic life gradually recovered and the new wealth led to the appearance of a leisured body of nobles, knights and middle-class men and women who developed a taste for luxury, art, and literature. But the comparative rapidity of their development after 1050 and the fact that it was earliest and most notable in the southeast of France disclose the influence of the Arab civilization in Spain. I gave an instance of this in the tenth century when a deputation from what the new history calls the high civilization of the Ottonian rejuvenated German empire went to Cordova and seemed like rustics on the threshold of a palace. Not long after that we find the German nun Hroswitha exclaiming in the course of a poem, "Cordova, my delight," and we read of an abbot in England prizing an astronomical instrument which he had bought from a Jewish pedlar from Spain. If the splendor of the Arab civilization was thus known to a nun in a remote German cloister and a monk in the heart of England, what was likely to be the effect upon southeastern France, to which there was, as we saw, in the case of Pope Pius II (Gerbert), an open highway from the magnificent and wealthy cities of Spain?

Roman Catholic historians, claiming the entire credit of founding European civilization for their church, have always mercilessly used their skill in suppressing or misrepresenting facts in order to conceal this influence. In the social sense it is one of the fundamental issues of European history to discover which were the real factors in rebuilding civilization from the eleventh century onward, and the church of Rome today bases its appeal largely on the claim that it was the chief factor. How does the "new" history stand on this most important issue? It fails lamentably to give the public a clear and sound knowledge of the truth. Professor Haskins, whom I do not count among the new historians but criticize at times, makes a scholarly inquiry about the many Christian scholars besides Gerbert who went from England, France, Germany, and Italy to study in the Arab colleges, where they found complete tolerance and hospitality; and few of the new historians use his results.

Professor Lucas has a long and good, if not quite adequate, description of the Arab civilization in Spain, but this is incongruously found in a chapter with the title "Culture Inspired by Religion," and he is leagues astray when he suggests that the influence of the Christian Greek empire was as great or greater. He says:

> The medieval Renaissance of the twelfth century was indeed due partly to the infiltration of Greek and Arab science and learning. This discovery spread over Christian lands from many quarters — Toledo, Cordova, Palermo, Naples, Venice and Constantinople.

We recognize that the marriage of Otto II to a Greek princess had led, for a time, to a sort of golden road from Constantinople to Saxony and the traffic stimulated and enriched Venice and other ports of northeast Italy. But the Greeks were themselves, at that time, degenerate. Professor Barnes tells us of a Greek emperor who blinded 15,000 Bulgarian captives, leaving one man his eyes to lead them home to Bulgaria. In any case, the long and stormy road from Constantinople to Saxony can no more be compared with the broad and easy route from Barcelona to France than the Byzantine culture can be compared with that of the Arabs. The reference to Palermo and Naples shows that Professor Lucas is at least aware that the Arabs built an equally brilliant civilization in Sicily and south Italy. Most of his colleagues do not seem to have heard of this.

Professor Langer gives a page to such men as Gregory I and Gregory VII for every line he gives to the most brilliant Arab rulers, but he does note that there was a great Arab-Persian civilization. Professor Thorndike generously says (p. 135):

> While in the Christian West civilization had sunk so low that actually monasteries were its mainstay, in the Moslem Orient and in Spain civilization was not merely preserved but in some respects progressed.

But this, like the preceding quotations, does not give the reader a good idea of the vast superiority of the Arab-Persian civilization to the semibarbarism of Europe generally from about A.D.500 to 1200 and of the paramount influence of its greatness on the recovery of Europe; and these are the only representatives of the new history who give the reader even a suspicion of the truth.

Even in these historians we can see only a concession to traditional prejudice in their persistent influence that the regenerating influence was Arab *and* Greek (or Byzantine). There was no comparison in the value of the two, as is seen in the fact that Greek influence was at its height by the year 970, two centuries before Europe begins to rise again. Morally and socially the Greek Christian empire had sunk almost as low as Roman Catholic Europe. It was much wealthier than the West and still cherished art (mainly ecclesiastical). But how little value there was even in its artistic education of part of Europe is plain from the fact that, apart from the Romanesque architecture in Germany, every expert dates the artistic recovery of Europe only from the twelfth or thirteenth century. And in all other respects (literature, science, general prosperity, general love of beauty in life, cleanliness, music, superb gardens and mansions, palaces and mosques, great cities, agricultural skill, administration, industry, religious toleration, etc.) the Arab-Persian civilization was as high above the Greek as the American civilization today is above that of the more backward South American republics. It is estimated by the experts that the half of the Spanish peninsula which the Arabs were content to hold had a population of 30,000,000 prosperous folk, while that of the whole of Spain fell to 7,000,000 beggared people after the "brilliant reconquest" of the Roman Catholic kings, assisted by the knights of France and England. Cordova had one million people (with 900 public baths, 600 — some say 3,000 — mosques and schools, 5,000 stores, and markets with the best products of Europe, Asia, and North Africa) while Rome and Paris had 20,000 to 30,000 poor and illiterate citizens. One source of the caliph's revenue gave him $12,000,000 a year, his chief palace cost about $200,000,000 in our money, and he could make a single New Year present of $5,000,000.

The miracle is not that this great civilization aroused Europe but that it took two centuries to pierce the shell of ignorance and fanaticism. Some of the new historians persist in calling it Moslem, hinting that a violent antagonism of the two religions prevented contact; but the greatest caliphs were skeptics, a fact which is again concealed in the history though it is of high social significance, and there was a vast amount of skepticism in the Arab population, since the land was covered with vineyards and all classes defied the Koran by drinking wine. The bulk of the population were still Spanish Christians, but we hardly ever find one of these among the tens of thousands who won distinctions in science, literature, or other fields. The Christians had complete freedom except when some fanatical priest or Moslem African fanatic stirred up trouble, and they shared the Arab culture and

love of beauty to an extent that annoyed the clergy.

The prejudice that afflicts the new history is conspicuously shown also in the almost complete suppression of the great part which the Jews played both in the construction of this civilization and the extension of it to Europe. Arab merchants had not the least temptation to quit their sunny and happy Andalusia to seek trade in the dreary north. They left that to the Jews, who, as long as the Arabs were in power, had a golden age and attained great wealth and distinction. It was Jews who took the fine products and instruments of Spain to the northern markets in spite of the vile treatment they received. There is a fine account of their service in spreading civilization — they traveled as far as China — in the *Cambridge Medieval History* (VI. 478) — but there is hardly a mention of it in the new history.

XXII
The Thirteenth Century

In 1085 the first great Arab city, Toledo, fell to a combined rabble of Spanish and French knights, and through it, when it had liberal rulers, Arab influence poured north in a broader stream. About the same time the Normans took Arab Sicily and south Italy, and before the middle of the twelfth century their enlightened king Roger II restored and protected the high Arab culture and, avoiding the boorish provinces of the pope, entered into cultural relations with the cities of northern Italy, which had never lost their Lombard culture. As in the meantime trade and industry advanced and wealth accumulated all over Europe, the Renaissance of the twelfth century, which we have considered, was bound to lend to a prosperity, a leisured middle-class, and an advance in art and schooling in the thirteenth century which should contrast so strongly with the preceding century that men might well imagine they had reached a golden age.

But in emphasizing the brighter features and concealing the grosser character of this century, and in greatly exaggerating the influence of the church and the piety of the people, the new historians have lent a fraudulent support to the Roman Catholic claim that it was one of the wonderful centuries of history, and that their church had proved at last that it is one of the greatest civilizing agencies. In the *Encyclopedia Americana*, in which the ripest results of scholarship to the year 1937 are supposed to be presented to the reader, the Roman Catholic physician, Dr. Walsh, whose knowledge of history is of the Roman Catholic propagandist type, is engaged to write a long article on "The Thirteenth Century." It has, he says, "been hailed by many as the greatest in the history of humanity." In support of this — more or less — he quotes an American philosopher (Fiske), an ambiguous compliment from a British literary man (Morley), a eulogy of it in England by the historian Froude, and a vague reference to a few literary men or historians of 100 to 150 years ago. Thus is the public educated when the interests of the Roman Catholic church are involved.

But Dr. Walsh could, if he had had at least a fair acquaintance with American historical literature, have claimed the support of many of the new historians. Most people know, and historical writers have never

failed to point out, that most of the great Gothic cathedrals of Europe were built, or at least begun, in that century, and that it saw the beginning of most of the old universities. And since the beauty of these is well known in America from photographs, while almost nothing that lies between them and pagan days is similarly known, it is easy for the Roman Catholic writer to suggest remarkable progress. It is true also, and entirely natural, that with the growth of population (especially the middle class) and wealth there was an advance in law and political administration, and a beginning of the foundation of hospitals.

All this is a plain manifestation of the increase of wealth and makes the thirteenth century the greatest since the decay of the Greek-Roman civilization. But by exaggerating and expatiating at great length and in lyrical language about the new achievements while they either suppress, misrepresent, or dismiss in a few lines the vices which put the century far below the level of modern civilization the new historians gravely mislead the reader and confirm the mendacious claims of the Roman Catholic sophist. Professor Thompson has this extraordinary passage, which is as unhistorical as his praise of chivalry, on the age:

> The thirteenth century has been compared [by whom?] to that of Greece in the time of Pericles. It is the peer of any age, and in some features is the greatest age in the history of the race. The mere lists of the great achievements of the thirteenth century reads like a roll of guns [which one does not usually *read*]. The names of the men and women who lived in it, the memory of whom shall not perish from the earth, forms a shining nebula. (*The Middle Ages*, 1931, p. xvii).

We rub our eyes when, in another passage, the same historian says:

> The growth of ingenious cruelty, to be distinguished from brutality, which is often due to callousness or indifference, in the thirteenth century is the most repulsive character to be found in this brutal epoch in the history of humanity.

And in this he has the support of every authority on the thirteenth century, in every Christian country in Europe. Burckhardt's classical history of the Renaissance is grisly with cruelty in all classes. The rulers of the cities of north Italy in which the splendor of the rebirth was most conspicuous vied with each other in inventing tortures. One prided himself that he invented a forty-day schedule of torture which would

keep the victim suffering for that period without killing him. Ezzolino de Romano, who is actually quoted by some of the American panegyrists of the thirteenth century as one of its leading ornaments, put to death by torture — the torture of thirst was such that the men in his jails drank their urine — 55,000 of his subjects in a small city-state. It was as bad in France, Germany and England (see Traill's *Social England*). Improvement of the law is supposed to be one of the "great achievements" of which Professor Thompson speaks, but it inflicted the most horrible tortures, including public castration. In England one of the leading nobles was thus castrated before the gleaming queen and her ladies and the public. In 1252 Simon de Monfort, another one of the highest nobles, was killed in battle, and the victor cut off the earl's head and sent it, decorated with one of his testicles on each side of the nose, as a present to a great lady. In papal Rome, as late as the sixteenth century, a Jew who had dared to hire a Christian whore had his organ cut off and was compelled to carry it on a pole through the main streets. In no century of European history was there a more frequent practice of cutting off testicles (sometimes the whole organ) and burning the tongues or eyes with a red-hot iron. The callousness was, of course, fully shared by the mass of the illiterate people. A man in Italy invited a neighbor who had killed his son to a feast of reconciliation and at the close told him that he had eaten the body of his own son.

Some of our historians count the signing of Magna Carta as the first installment of democracy, one of the glories of the century. They do not add that the "great pope" Innocent III denounced it as a "devil-inspired document" — the barons had not asked his permission to exact it — and in any case it merely forced the king to share the rule and loot with the bishops and barons. They still had feudal power over the people (nine-tenths of the race) and exercised it with all the old brutality and injustice. The people remained entirely illiterate. They were too poor to hire the appallingly crude surgeons (barbers) and physicians, and were treated in their diseases only with the foul and noxious drugs (rats' or frogs' blood, a maid's menstrual blood, pills against plague, strands of the hangman's rope) of the Dark Age. The average expectation of life was about twenty-five years.

The time will doubtless come when the clerical apologists and the friendly historical writers will say: "At least the church gave the people, nobles and workers, lay and clerics, one thing that they have not realized even in our time — complete sexual freedom." Meantime, since chastity is held by these gentlemen to be the worst of vices, do they pretend that they find this beautiful century comparatively free from it?

They are careful not to say a single word about it. In fact, there is no century in the whole of the Middle Ages in regard to which they venture to study the general moral character. But the thirteenth century was the worst. The British Positivist historian, Carter Morrison, gives the result of considerable research on this point in his *Service of Man*. When he comes to the chapter on morals in the thirteenth century, he calls it (1903 edition, p. 36) "an age of violence, fraud, and impurity such as can hardly be conceived now." I have given the evidence, with contemporary authorities, in a dozen works, and I am prepared to hold that the thirteenth century was not surpassed for sexual freedom by any other century in history.

But, says Professor Thompson, it has a list of names that "shine like a nebula." Incidentally, a nebula emits so dull a light that only two out of the millions of nebulae can be seen at all with the naked eye. However, who are these wonderful men of the thirteenth century? H. D. Sedgwick, in one of these eulogistic works (*Italy in the Thirteenth Century*, 2 vols., 1913) which have so helped Roman Catholic propaganda in America, says (I. 253):

> No other country can produce a list of men to match Innocent III, Frederick II, St. Francis, Ezzolino de Romano, Thomas Aquinas, Nicholo Pisseno, Giotto, and Dante.

I have spoken of Ezzolino, one of the vilest men of the age, and will speak presently of Francis (whom it is amusing to find among the eight greatest men), Innocent, Frederic (who was neither an Italian nor a Christian), and Aquinas (who was great in nothing but theology). Other glorifiers of the century add Albertus Magnus and Roger Bacon, whom also we consider presently. As to the comparison with other countries, did Sedgwick never hear how Germany gave birth in half that period of time to Handel, Bach, Beethoven, Frederick the Great, Catherine the Great (a German), Goethe, Schiller, Lessing, Herder, Humboldt, and Kant? France and England were equally fertile. But we shall get this issue in its proper perspective if we examine the notorious blots (the massacre of the Albigensians and the Inquisition) on the age and such acknowledged achievements as the Gothic cathedrals and the universities.

XXIII The Albigensian Massacre

Upon the first quarter of the thirteenth century there was in all history until this American school appeared a scarlet brand which prevented any men from calling it one of the great ages of the human record. This is the massacre of the Albigensians (followed by the massacre of the Waldensians), in which some hundreds of thousands of French and Italians, the happiest and most prosperous folk of the time, were drowned in their blood because they refused to submit to the papacy and its teaching. These heretics were chiefly found in Provence, the southeast corner of France, which was, as I explained, in easy communications through Barcelona with the Arab cities of Spain and therefore most advanced in civilization. From the East they had received a heresy which, like the Manichaean religion of the fourteenth century, was based on the ancient Persian dualism that god had created spirit only and that the devil had created matter. They recognized Christ as a pure spirit and the Roman Catholic religion as grossly materialistic; and they had a well organized church, with priests and bishops, with the city of Albi as its center. The pope says in one of his letters that they had 500 towns and that they had practically the whole population of that region, and this is confirmed by the fact that it took a vast army of 400,000 knights and infantry several years to destroy them.

Now this large and ugly historical fact has been a sore thumb to the Roman Catholic apologist in modern times. This extensive revolt against the papacy did not agree with their contention that the medieval folk were deeply devoted to the church; especially as it was just the culmination of a steadily-growing apostasy ever since the mind of Europe was reawakened, and it was expressly grounded upon the sight of the general corruption of the papal church. With their usual zeal to dupe the public they obscured the extent of the revolt and concealed the character and brutality of the pope's "Crusaders"; and, particularly to meet one age of "social interest," they falsely alleged that the religion of the Albigensians cut the very roots of secular civilization and that the princes and people urged the church to act against the heretics.

What have our new historians done in this situation? Most of them have either ignored this important chapter of history as it violently

contradicts their general assumption that the people were devoted to their "holy church," or they endorse the most disreputable part of the Roman Catholic contention. Professor Thompson here deserts the company of the angels and has a long and generally good account. Languedoc and Provence were, he says, "the happiest and most prosperous countries in Europe." They were unique in the fact that their princes and people were urbane and intellectually tolerant, while the popes with their ferocious Crusaders were "notorious ruffians." Unfortunately, he does not distinguish between the small ascetic minority, the "perfect" or the "good men," who took the contempt of matter austerely, and the great majority who took no notice of their practices. But it is essential to make this distinction.

Professor Langer also is generally sound but fails to make the essential distinction. He admits that the movement began as "a reaction against corruption," but he has no right idea to add that the local princes adopted it because it gave them an excuse to take over clerical property. The chief of their princes, the Count of Toulouse, was himself a skeptic who saw that his people were far better civilized in their heresy than the rest of France was. Langer speaks of "the brilliant Provencal culture." Professors Barnes, Sheppard and Godfrey, and Perkins almost ignore the great outrage, and Professor Thorndike generally follows the good account given in the *Cambridge Medieval History* (VI, 704): though he weakens this by bringing in the Roman Catholic theory that the people hated heretics — in Provence the people *were* the heretics — and that the kind-hearted pope only reluctantly invited the French knights (whose "chivalry" he has earlier praised) to chastise the heretics for a month. He is, however, almost the only one to point out that "the perfect," who regarded sex and marriage with horror, were few. Sellery and Krey also rightly say: "Much of the spread of Albigensianism was due more to discontent with the lives of the Christian clergy than to genuine conversions to the tenets of the sect." Not "much" but the overwhelmingly greater part of the heresy was just a revolt against Rome with the same lip-homage to the ideals of the small minority as Roman Catholics paid to the "higher counsels" of voluntary poverty and chastity.

The vital importance of this distinction is seen when we turn to the long and lamentable version in Professor Lucas. He says (p. 407):

> It is not surprising that both the Albigensians and their antisocial teachings were detested. . . . Such teachings aroused hatred in a society which rested on homage and in which chivalry

> was an important ideal. In no age will men permit their chief institutions of public and private life to be ruined. The people of the thirteenth century rallied to the church and the princes refused to tolerate the Albigensians.

This amazing passage is not only a reproduction of what I should call one of the most shameful pieces of Roman Catholic sophistry but it is historically false in every line. The idea that the illiterate masses of the Middle Ages reasoned about the effect of heresies on the bases of their civic institutions is absurd, but in fact, as I said, the prosperous people of Provence and Languedoc *were* the heretics. Southeastern France was so solidly heretical that, as we saw, it took 400,000 knights and soldiers several years to conquer the region. These people were, moreover, as I have quoted from Professor Thompson and Professor Langer, the most civilized and prosperous in Europe instead of having their civic institutions ruined. Their princes — chiefly the Count of Toulouse — did not rally to the church until the pope had, by infamous means, ruined them. The king of France refused to give his name to the Crusade, though he later drew all the profit he could from it. The Crusade itself was, according to all experts and contemporary Roman Catholic writers, a sordid scramble for loot, conducted with savagery, and, instead of saving the fine civic institutions and property in the south, completely ruined them and handed over the ruined province to an alien adventurer. But the irony of the Roman Catholic version, which Professor Lucas had adopted, deepens when we ask what were these "antisocial" doctrines of the strict minority of the Albigensians. They were a refusal to take oaths (as recommended in the New Testament) and a stern insistence on celibacy, which the church itself required of all its priests, monks and nuns and lauded as the greatest of human virtues! The Albigensian teachers no more insisted that the mass of the faithful should observe these ideals than the Christian leaders did. The Roman Catholic reproach to the heretics ought, if it were honest, to be that the Albigensian "perfect" observed their vows while the monks, priests, and nuns of the Roman church did not.

Let me add here a word about the Jews, who, while still in perfect freedom and high regard in Arab Spain, were so notoriously treated with barbarity in Christendom that I need quote no evidence. Professor Lucas, however, says (p. 393):

> Our medieval ancestors were none too generous in their outlook toward the Jews. Churchmen as a rule were opposed to

> persecution of the Jews, and popes displayed laudable tolerance toward them throughout the Middle Ages. But the common people frequently resorted to violence.

This again is borrowed from Roman Catholic propaganda but is so false that I need take up only the reference to the popes. Only five popes in the whole medieval series ever protected the Jews from injustice or violence and as Graetz shows in each case in his classical *History of The Jews*, they were paid for or had a financial interest in doing so.

XXIV
The Fourth Crusade

Pope Innocent's 200,000 knights and 200,000 footmen, their appetites whetted by the third Crusade, finished their vile work in Provence in 1215, and Pope Innocent in the following year turned their faces, irradiated with idealism, toward Palestine for the fourth Crusade. His letters betray by this time he was fully aware of their savagery. He was to die in that year, 1216, but before he died they gave him one more awful proof of their character, and again, for the good of the church, he forgave them. For this Crusade shows once more the real character of the man of the thirteenth century — nobles and knights as well as common folk — yet most of our historians decline to consider the lesson. Professor Langer mentions "unparalleled horrors," and Professor Thorndike admits that Innocent III was reconciled to the "atrocities and brutal crimes" by "the prospect of seeing all southeastern Europe under papal control" (p. 443), but most of them seem to feel that even a summary reference to it, if correct, would detract from their estimate of the century as the most wonderful, most beautiful, and the greatest in history.

The Crusaders began by a sordid bargain with the Venetians, which greatly angered the pope. To pay for their transport for which the Venetians exacted high terms, they seized the Roman Catholic city of Zara and handed it over to Venice. Then, instead of making for Palestine, they treacherously seized Constantinople itself from the Greek Catholics. If you will bear in mind that the Roman Catholics did not differ from the Greeks in regard to the sanctity of churches, the real presence of Christ, relics, etc., this picture of drunken knights and soldiers fouling the great cathedral of Sancta Sophia (the St. Peter's of the Greeks), which I translate from the *Chronicles of Nicetas*, the leading Greek writer of the time, will give you a truer idea of the thirteenth century than the ability of a few score of architects to design beautiful churches:

> They threw the relics of the holy martyrs into the vilest places (privies and dungheaps), trod the sacred images underfoot, and, we shudder to hear, spilled the divine blood and body of Christ on

the ground. . . . Their defilement of the great church is horrible to relate. The high altar, constructed in precious metals of all kinds, was broken into pieces which were distributed among the soldiers, as were all the sacred vessels, the ornaments (far surpassing anything in Europe), and the pure silver, inlaid with gold, that decorated the screen, the pulpit, and the doors of the sanctuary. To take them away, mules and other beasts were brought right up into the sanctuary, and some of them slipped on the marble floors of the church, were stabbed, and the sacred enclosure was fouled with dung and blood. A whore . . . sat on the patriarch's throne (the equivalent of the See of Peter) and sang lewd songs and danced. All of them committed the gravest of crimes. Were those who perpetrated such things likely to spare decent matrons and marriageable maids or virgins consecrated to God? Every attempt to soften them made them furious, and they often drew daggers against an appeaser. No one was spared. In the alleys, streets, and churches you heard nothing but the moaning of women and the groans of men. You saw nothing but rape, the taking of captives, the severing of families. . . . [In Murator's *Byzantine Histories*, XIV, 75.]

Monks and priests joined at least in the looting. And the great Pope Innocent III, the "towering figure" of the century in the new history, sent the army and the clergy in Constantinople a letter, which we still have (VII. 15 in the Mizine collection), in which he most effusively gives thanks for this glorious deed:

> We rejoice, for he who rules the kingdom of man and gives it to whomsoever he will has transferred the kingdom of Constantinople from the proud to the humble, from the disorderly to the devout, from the schismatics to [Roman] Catholics, from the Greeks to the Latins. This surely is the change in the right hand of the most high in which the Roman church is exalted and the daughters return to the mother. We thank God who has added this glory to His Holy Name.

Do you imagine that Innocent did not know what had happened? The 5,000 letters of his (all written in eighteen years) that survive show that he had incomparably the best intelligence-service in Europe. And do not imagine that this and the Albigensian massacre were exceptional eruptions of brutality in the beautiful century or that this was the

character only of the English, French, and Norman knights who went on the Crusade. The Germans and Italians were locked in a struggle. A little earlier (1197) Henry had led his German army into Sicily which one hundred years before this had been as happy and civilized as Spain, to assert his power. Let me again translate a few lines from the chronicle of monk Otto:

> He burned down the city, not even sparing its churches. He set fire to the church of St. Agatha with a crowd of people of both sexes and all ages who had taken refuge in it. . . . [He then forged a plot of the nobles.] He summoned the unsuspecting nobles to him, put them in chains and, after inflicting terrible tortures, slew them. Margantoni, one of the chief barons, and a learned man named Richard he deprived of their eyes, and he had the skin stripped off another of his victims. Another who had aspired to the crown he had pierced with nails. Some were bound to stakes and burned alive. Some were pierced through the belly with stakes.

Bishops and archbishops were blinded or castrated. Some were made to sit in chairs with seats of red-hot iron or to wear red-hot crowns. This emperor's son was the great Frederick II, with all his faults the greatest monarch in the world at this time. He might have really established civilization in Italy, but he fell foul of the popes, who brought in the French and a fresh flood of horrors to oust the Germans. And it ended (until the Spaniards came later) with the revolt of the Sicilian vespars, which made Europe shudder; the Sicilians ripping open the bellies of their own women whom the French had raped to get rid of the last trace of them.

With great scorn of the rest of us who think differently Professor Thompson, who has written many thousands of pages on the Middle Ages, and has a better knowledge of the period than any other of our historians, says: "The intellectual and spiritual awakening between 1100 and 1300 made these two centuries one of the noblest periods of in the history of the progress of the human race." Roman Catholics must find that "testimony" of the leading representative of the new history very useful.

XXV
Pope Innocent III and Frederic II

The pope who ordered the massacre of the Albigensians (and the subsequent execution of many thousands of Waldensians, or early Protestants, in north Italy) and applauded the terrible rape of Constantinople was, from the religious angle, the greatest of the popes. He was a man of great ability and power, of deep religious feeling, and in all our historians the leader of the list of the geniuses of the thirteenth century. Professor Langer, it is true, calls him "a tough-minded Italian patrician whose frequent opportunism destroyed his moral grandeur," and Professor Lucas hardly deigns to mention him, but for most of them he is "the greatest monarch of the Middle Ages" (Thorndike), and "a towering figure" (Boak and Slossom) and so on. He certainly did things. He was the destroyer of the medieval attempt to set up democracy, the pope who told the world that the Magna Carta was a "devil-inspired document," and no one questions that he let loose rivers of blood in Italy and Germany by the wars he caused. We grant that he did this in order to strengthen the power of the church, not for personal aggrandisement. We do not question his ability or his sincerity. But do historians who represent his age as great, noble, beautiful, and spiritual, and him as chief architect, deal honestly with the modern public in suppressing or misrepresenting what he actually did?

He belonged to the Italian nobility, and his first campaign as pope was to put an end to the democratic party in Rome. One of our historians counts it among the glories of the thirteenth century that it saw "the beginning of representative government." This seems to be a crude reference to Magna Carta, which Innocent actually forbade King John to carry out, and he excommunicated the barons for their "nefarious presumption" in compelling John to sign it. But the real story of medieval democracy is not mentioned by most of our historians, and is not adequately treated by any of them. Since the democratic mission of Arnold of Brescia, a noble-minded ex-monk and pupil of Abelard, whom the pope hanged in 1155, there was a fine struggle by educated Italians to this self-government. The emperors and local rulers destroyed this in the north, but in Rome, where it was strongest, it fought the popes and drove Innocent from Rome in 1203. But he succeeded in destroying the

party, and their aspiration was little heard again until Cola di Rienzi revived it 150 years later, when the popes had destroyed Rome.

I have referred to the barbartity with which the German (Roman) emperor Henry VI had treated Italy. At his death he left a nervous muddle-headed widow, Constantia, and the child who was to become Frederic II. The pope persuaded her to make him guardian of the child, and, in gratitude, to make Sicily (still a rich kingdom) a fief of the papacy, paying an annual fee of 30,000 gold pieces and feudal service whenever required by the pope. This monstrous bargain extorted from an ailing and distacted woman — she died shortly afterwards — and the treachery of the pope to his oath to guard Frederic's interests did a profound injury to Italy by leading to the long and bitter feud of Frederic and the popes and a lot of barbarous warfare. Innocent, while Frederic was a child, encouraged a French adventurer to come and take over his Sicilian kingdom, and later a German to try to take his German dominion. He actually instructed the German nobles that they were under no obligation to Henry's son as an oath to an unbaptized infant had no force.

There is no space here to deal with all the sordid details of this and other intrigues in which the pope moved. In England, as I said, he espoused the cause of the royal beast, King John, and suspended his own legate for refusing to publish the excommunication of the bishops and barons who had won Magna Carta. He supported John's beastly successor and said nothing about his mutilation of Prince Arthur. He had allowed John to marry twice, but when Philip of France wanted to discard his wife and marry his mistress — any noble or prince could pay the Roman officials to find a flaw in his marriage in those spiritual days — the pope sternly refused until his interests changed, when he granted the divorce and declared the three children of Philip's mistress legitimate. He made profit by these royal divorces and marriages all over Eurpoe, and in the end, as I said, sought a large increase of the wealth and power of his church by sending out the fourth Crusade. It was in preparation for this that Innocent intitiated the practice of allowing penitents in the confessional to "pay alms to the church" (virtually paying for absolution), which became in time the colossal abuse of the sale of indulgences. I have a collection of these as they were still sold (over the counter) in Spain in the first quarter of this century, and they describe themselves as "bulls of the crusade" (the fourth).

I am not going to represent Frederic II as a faultless hero and Innocent as the villain of the first half of the century. The succeeding popes, inheriting the treachery of Innocent, conducted so foul and

bitter a campaign against Frederic and his imperial rights that he was, at times, driven to harsh and questionable acts. The power of the popes had been so exalted by Innocent that by a stroke of the pen, by excommunication and interdict, a pope could invite a king's subjects to begin a civil war against him and entice any greedy and powerful royal neighbor to try to seize his throne.

The popes of the thirteenth century caused a monstrous amount of bloodshed in this way. Frederic was the worst sufferer. His life was wasted and his great constuctive genius lost to the race in fights for his dominions. He grew up among Moslem scholars (or skeptics who were nominal Moslems) in what was left of the fine Arab civilization in Sicily. He wanted to extend this ideal of a free, refined life and love of art, science, and beauty to his dominions; Germany and a large part of Italy. But the civil legacy of Innocent's "guardianship" pursued him throughout life. Innocent had got the fourth Lateran Council in 1215 to enact that at their coronation all Christian princes must swear to persecute heretics and to lead an army on Crusade when the pope required. Frederic was himself a profound heretic — we do not know if he was a deist or an Atheist — and he knew, as half of Europe did, that there was no need for a bloody Crusade to get permission for Christians to visit Jerusalem. But, in order to get coronation in Rome, without which he lost the empire, he had to order that heretics should be burned — there is no proof that they ever were in his dominions — and when he got freedom for Christians to go on pilgrimage by friendly negotiation with the Moslems the pope snarled and spat excommunications worse than ever.

To the historian with modern ideas the first half of the thirteenth century presents a fascinating drama. The two "towering figures," Innocent and Frederic, represent violently opposed ideals: the ideal of the Dark Age and the ideal of the world of science and happiness. A genuinely "new" history would have a fine opportunity here. But for the most part the historians ignore Frederic and his ambitions and praise to the heavens the thirteenth century of the pope. Professor Langer salutes Frederic as "the most brilliant ruler and most learned man of his day," but he is alone. Frederic is not even in the index of some of the large manuals. Professor Lucas gives him five lines (including one vile calumny to which I shall return); and these are followed by three lyrical pages on Francis of Assisi!

XXVI
The Inquistion

So far we have recognized two conspicuous characters of the wonderful century: a general repulsive cruelty and a ruthless papal policy of increasing the power of the church. It is generally understood that the Inquisition is a natural revolting outcome of the blend of these two characters, and the Roman Catholic apologists of our time have smothered the subject with lies and fallacies which confuse the modern reader. Does the new history show that it has conscientiously studied both sides and is putting the objective scientific truth about this famous institution before the American public? On the contrary, not a single one of the new historians tells the truth about it. Most of them (Langer, Barnes, Geise, Perkins, Thorndike, Sheppard, Boak) barely mention it in their long account of the beautiful century, observing that it "must be estimated in the light of those times," "though that is not a sufficient justification" (Thorndike). Professor Thompson says (p. 938) that "it is well to remember that the medieval church was the child of a cruel age and no crueler than the Christian state." We had thought, on the professor's word, that the age was the noblest in history, and we are not edified to learn that the church was, on an important point of character, on the low level of the communities it was supposed to uplift. But when Professor Thompson goes on to say that the study of Roman law had recently been revived and it was in Roman law that the church found these tortures and penalties, we can only remind ourselves that he is not an authority on ancient Rome. The use of torture in Roman law was restricted, and even the use of a few tortures on slaves was warmly denounced by the great Stoic lawyers. Professor Thompson is here following some Roman Catholic writer who is pretending that the atrocious tortures attributed to the Roman authorities in martyr-stories which the Roman Catholic experts themselves have thoroughly discredited were authentic. As a matter of fact, he seems to betray his source when he recommends Vacandard as a reliable authority on the subject. This man was a Roman Catholic of the French church and a determined apologist, sophist, and liar.

To our great surprise we find Professor Haskins making the same serious mistake and telling his readers that this outrageous French

priest is "scholarly and fair-minded." He is the chief fabricator of the miserable fiction that the princes and people so hated and maltreated heretics that they forced the church to intervene and regularize the proceedings. Professor Haskins says: "The church had the support of popular opinion as well as the civil authority, for the heretic was regarded as a sort of anarchist, an antisocial person who struck at the foundations of society" (365). That large crowds of grossly ignorant people were fired by the priests against heretics no one will question, but all this talk about their fear for their social interests is based solely upon Roman Catholic literature, not upon contemporary documents. There is, on the other hand, abundant evidence (a lot is given in Lea's *History of the Inquisition*) that Rome had to bribe or intimidate rulers or civic authorities on all sides to proceed against the heretics. It had to award part of the property of an accused man to the civic authorities. There is ample evidence that the inquisitors were hated.

But the most deplorable passage is in Professor Lucas' book manual (p. 408):

> The Inquisition is usually referred to with a shudder, and the most lurid stories are told about it. Throughout the Dark Age churchmen held that compulsion in religion was not permitted. But as heresy grew in the quarrel about investitures the people, when thoroughly enraged, began to burn heretics. As Albigensians increased, the Pope ordered an Inquisition, and handed over the heretic to the secular arm. The chief penalty was the confiscation of property and banishment. This, of course, was more humane than the fanatical popular practice of burning at the stake, which became all too common. Until the emperor, Frederic II, who ruled from 1212 to 1250, the character of the Inquisition changed greatly. He issued a law in 1224 that condemned heretics to be burned or to have their tongues cut out . . . and the popes made this the normal punishment.

I should have thought that only a Jesuit, whose readers dare not check him, was capable of making so many historical errors in a paragraph.

That "churchmen" did not sanction compulsion until the end of the Dark Age is an extraordinary misstatement. Is it possible that a professor of history had never heard of the score of decrees (already quoted by Gibbon a century and a half ago), rising to the death penalty, which the fourth century bishops extorted from the Roman emperors for the suppression of paganism? Is it possible that he never heard of the

famous phrase — *compelle intrare* — in which Augustine recommended this policy? And if the historian evades this by the quibble that the Dark Age had not yet begun, has he never read how Pope Leo I dealt with the Manichaeans of Rome in A.D.444 after getting the most stupid evidence against them by torture, and how (in letter XV) he praised the bishops of Spain and other provinces who compelled the state to put heretics to death? In the Greek Catholic world this policy was so vigorously pursued that an empress of the ninth century, very docile to the bishops, executed 100,000 heretics, and an emperor of the tenth century 200,000.

But we will admit that in the West, where illiteracy was universal, there was little heresy to persecute during the Dark Age. To say, however, that heretics did not multiply until the struggle over investiture, which had nothing to do with heresy, is absurd. That struggle did not begin until after 1075, yet we find persecution in Germany in 1012, and in 1017 thirteen canons and priests and a lot of laymen of one French diocese were tried and burned alive for heresy. All through that century cases occurred in France, Belgium, Germany and Italy. Many were burned alive in Spain before the end of the century, and in 1211, sixty were burned in a batch in Germany. As early as 1147, the Albigensians, the most radical heretics, were so numerous in the south of France that Bernard of Clairvaux, who went there on a preaching campaign found, he said, "the churches deserted" and princes and people solidly opposed to the church. Instead of there being a change of policy when Frederic intervened for the first time in 1220 — I have explained why — the Lateran Council of 1139 had violently urged the secular powers to persecute, which they generally refused, and the new Lateran (general) Council in 1179 renewed the pressure and tempted princes by saying they might confiscate the property of condemned heretics and offering them other inducements.

Still, as we saw, the secular powers in France and Italy generally refused to move, and Pope Innocent had to order murder on a large scale. He had found heretics in his own palace at Viterbo and among the magistrates. Between 1204 and 1212 he issued four decrees driving bishops to "search out" (*inquisito*) heresy by means of "searchers" (*inquisitores*) instead of writing for accusations, and he told them how to do it. And in his famous appeal to them he urged that if treason to an earthly king was rightly punished with death, how much graver was treason to god. It was then laid down that princes must take an oath before coronation to persecute, and in that light we understand the politic action of Frederic. Persecution was already fully established on

every side, and it is strange to find a historian stating that Frederic influenced the growth of the foul practice. By that time heretics had for two centuries been burned after ecclesiastical trial in the same way as they had been burned in the fifth century.

While no definite date can be assigned for the establishment of the institution, its broad lines were traced by Innocent III and his predecessors in the twelfth century. In the course of the thirteenth century the structure was completed and if any man who really knows it can refer to it without a shudder he must be tough. It is not merely that our age regards the penalty of death for opinions as a crime, but the proceeding was murderous. When the Inquisition, travelling like a circus procession, reached a town, people were invited to denounce neighbors secretly. The accused never confronted or knew his accuser. No lawyer dare defend him, no witness to give evidence in his favor. Hatred and greed — for the accuser shared the confiscated property of the victim — were thus encouraged. The victim was tortured, if he said that he was innocent, and doubtless in many cases he sought relief by confession. If by his light reference to "lurid tales" Professor Lucas questions the use of torture, not only is the evidence decisive but when the dungeons of the Inquisition were opened by the people in Spain in the nineteenth century the grisly instruments were found there; as they had been found in the Spanish Armada. And to the historian who claims that the executions were far less in number than the number accused, we must remember that dead men as well as living were denounced to the inquisitors, because usually there was no one to defend them, and their property was confiscated and divided.

Some take the word of Dr. Pastor, one of the more scrupulous of Roman Catholic historians, that there were no executions in Rome. They do not notice his further remark that when Pope Leo XIII threw open the secret archives of the Vatican to scholars, Pastor found that a number of documents had been abstracted, including the records of the Roman Inquisition. But Pastor might have learned from the annals of Cardinal Baronius, the father of Roman Catholic history, that in 1231 "a large number of priests, clerks, and laymen" were condemned by the Inquisition in Rome. Not only was their property divided among the accusers and the authorities but their homes were razed to the ground and the sites turned into places for depositing filth. I have shown numbers of other cases of execution in Rome from contemporary Roman witnesses (the *Chronicle* of Richard of San Germano and the *Diary* of Cornelius Firmianus, etc.).

Of the Spanish Inquisition, which was the vilest of all, both in cruelty

and greed, our historians take little notice. Some of them, however, follow Roman Catholic writers who assure us that "modern historians" — they suppress the clerical titles of these gentlemen — have proved that Llorente's statement that it had 341,042 victims in about a century — it is a Spanish Roman Catholic writer who says that rich victims then ran short so business stopped — is a monstrous exaggeration. I have shown elsewhere (partly in Little Blue Book 1134, *The Horrors of The Inquisition*) that this is false. Llorente was not the "scurrilous" Voltairean that they represent him to have been. He was a church dignitary in Spain and secretary to the Inquisition and had the official documents. In fact, the common representation that the holy friar-inquisitors were at least sincere if misguided covers a multitude of sins. We have reliable evidence that the houses of the inquisitors were sometimes practically brothels, young women being arrested simply for the purpose of enjoying them.

XXVII
The Founding of The Universities

The artistic splendor of the Middle Ages being familiar to everybody our historians cannot represent that they have made a discovery here, so they pay particular attention to the intellectual development. Here, they say, by candidly considering the evidence we are able to rebuke the prejudice that still speaks about the "ignorance of the Middle Ages." In point of fact they have discovered less than Professor Thompson discovered in regard to the Dark Age, but they present the familiar evidence in a form that the social student must resent and that enormously exaggerates the share of the church. In the latter connection I do not know a single one of them who draws attention to the fact that while north Italy was in the van of the European advance, the pope's temporal kingdom dragged along in the rear until about the middle of the fifteenth century. Until then it had no university and no school of art. Its history explains that, the apologist exclaims. Quite. But the popes in quitting it for Avignon, and then entering upon a long and disastrous struggle for the tiara, were responsible for its history.

On broad lines the intellectual development of Europe after the year 1050, which I take roundly to mark the end of the Dark Age, is easily understood and was hampered rather than inspired by the church. Like the artistic development it meant chiefly the accumulation of wealth and increase of a middle class and the inspiration of the fine intellectual life of Arab Spain and Sicily. It is quite true that to that time all schools were episcopal or monastic. The middle class was insignificant, very few nobles (relative to the large number) wanted schooling, and the serfs were left in a gross illiteracy. The pupils were priestlings or monklings, though there was a broader culture in north Italy, a relic of Lombard rule.

The awakening and the rise to university standard is best seen in France in the days of Peter Abelard, the first quarter of the twelfth century. As a youth in the last quarter of the eleventh century, he found lively schools in the French provinces and scholars — youths who did not intend to join the church or a monastery — wandering from school to school in search of adventure. He was mature and a brilliant teacher when he reached Paris and began to shake the throne of the priest-

professor of the episcopal or cathedral school. In the next twenty years it was brilliant independent scholars like Abelard, not any church impulse from within, that drew thousands of scholars to these and to the new lay independent schools. As Abelard called his son Astrolabe, which was the name of an Arab astronomical instrument, it is clear that he knew of and esteemed Arab science, but the church at once scented heresy. It persecuted Abelard and other independents and forced the new intellectual vitality into the theological rut.

Our historians find this culture-in-blinkers, as we may call it, highly important. Professor Thompson says (p. 765):

> The influence of the church was the paramount factor in the normal organization of the universities. The church was the sole source of learning.

He quotes, with approval, the words of Emerton:

> It is in these early efforts of the human mind to work out in what seemed to be a scientific fashion the greatest problems of faith and thought that we find the beginning of man's higher conception.

Piffle! They speculated, with the church-police zealously watching, on the precise ways to formulate the church-doctrines, just as the Jewish rabbis brooded on the law and the prophets and the Moslem teachers on the Koran. Apart from this, their great problem, which had all the schools in an uproar, was: Do our general or abstract ideas represent something that exists outside the mind or are all really existing things individuals? Professor Lucas, who admires "the philosophy, science, and theology of the Middle Ages" (p. 423), and others find this struggle important. In the thirteenth century the growing familiarity with the great skeptics of the Arab civilization and the acquisition from them of a Latin translation of Aristotle forced their leaders to turn defensively to a broader study of philosophy, even political philosophy. But even the Roman Catholic idol Thomas Aquinas (who significantly got his education in south Italy) took the main principles of his philosophy and practically all his political philosophy from Aristotle. He violently distorted Aristotle's metaphysics, which is bad enough, to suit the creed, and imposed on culture a new brood of oracles, the Aristotelian philosophers who proved as inimical to science as to theologians.

Professor Thompson stresses what he calls the heavy debt of modern science to these medieval universities. American history has cer-

tainly moved — name the direction yourself — since, about forty years ago, I was invited to lecture on this subject in the historical section of Columbia University. The control of the new universities by the church and the installation of friar-teachers cut out science. To talk of the science of Thomas Aquinas, as some do, is an abuse of language. But Albert the Great and Roger Bacon! Our professors on the whole are reserved about Bacon. I assume that they know but do not care to tell how the authorities of his orders "confined him to barracks" for more than twenty years, and that G. Sarton, the chief American historian of science, gives it as now agreed that all his science came from the Spanish Arabs. Bishop Grosseteste (died 1253) founded a school of this science at Oxford — the one university, except Naples, with such a school — and, before the frowns of churchmen ruined it, Friar Roger filled his capacious memory. Our historians rather praise Albert the Great, who not only similarly had a good knowledge of Greek (Aristotle's) and Arab science but was, they say, one of the great pioneers of botany by his personal observations. Strange that our botanists never mention him. In any case he was a German noble and not to be treated lightly, but the church effectually silenced him with a bishop's mitre. We might ask our eulogists of the "two great scientists" to say how many pupils or successors they had. History is more interested in permanent advances.

If we take the founding of the universities, which is described by all as one of the glories of the thirteenth century, in something like chronological order we get the same view of intellectual development. When we speak of the founding of universities we do not mean anything like what the phrase means today. In medieval history it means that certain schools which had confined their teaching to theology or law broadened their schedules and became schools of "general study" or — as far as this phrase then had any meaning — "universal culture." This was a gradual development and dates cannot be assigned. But educational historians are generally agreed that the order of the appearance of the earliest was Salerno, Montpelier, Bologna, Paris and Oxford.

Here again we find the perverse bias of the new historians. Lucas gives the first three as Paris, Oxford, Cambridge; Thorndike as Bologna, Paris, Oxford, and so on. Few of them even mention Salerno and Montpelier, while there is quite a general agreement amongst educationalists that these were the first, and long before the thirteenth century (as Powicke has proved). But you see the point. They grew out of schools of Arab medieval science, for one was on the fringe of Arab civilization in south Italy and Montpelier, in the extreme southeast of

France, had long had a colony of middle-class Jews with Arab culture. Bologna, which began as a school of law, was in the very heart of that part of Italy which had clung throughout the Dark Age to the culture the Lombards had given it in the eighth and ninth centuries. So Oxford and Paris were little more than large colleges of theology and Aristotelian philosophy — for the temporary school of Arab science at Oxford had been regarded much as a school of sexology would be if one were established in connection with Harvard — get all the honors in the new history. They were wholly ecclesiastical and free from menace to the papacy.

XXVIII
The Inspiration of Art

Until our Modernist schools of art, which we may disregard, arose, neither artists nor historians failed in the least to appreciate the great art of the Middle Ages, so that our new historians could not well claim to have discovered its greatness. Some of them, it is true, complain that we do not appreciate the early Gothic paintings and sculpture but we may refer them to the authorities on art. The chief fault we find here is that many of them, ignoring the work of recent historians of art on the subject (for instance, Faure's *History of Art*, 4 vols., 1921), repeat the Roman Catholic chant that the church inspired the art of the Middle Ages. We can't produce such work today, some of them say: forgetting that Roman Catholic countries themselves have produced no great art for several centuries. It shows, Professor Thorndike says (397), "what the church could accomplish when everyone belonged to it and believed in it," which does not in the least explain why art from about 1600 onward withered in Italy, Spain and Portugal, while Germany and Britain still produced notable works of art. "The Gothic art," unctuously says Professor Lucas, "was the product of the medieval creative spirit impregnated with the Christian faith." "Medieval art," says Thompson, "was almost wholly an expression of real Christianity; it was an adjunct of the church" (829). Professor Boak, on the other hand, says that "the thirteenth-century artist was more concerned with producing an effect of beauty than with depicting a religious theme" (244). Professor Barnes also deals soberly with it and finds in it rather the "spirit of the communes" than the inspiration of religion; as Faure has shown.

The historians who repeat the Roman Catholic claim are not here making statements on the ground of historical evidence but superficially imitating the man who says, when he sees a great cathedral or painting, which we produce no longer, that it *must* have been the medieval church that inspired them. When, for instance, Professor Thompson enters into detail he sees that Gothic art arose out of the effort to remedy the limitations and defects of the Romanesque; just as, he might have added, the Romanesque arose out of an effort to adapt the ancient Roman style to the severer climate (dimmer light, heavy snow on roof,

etc.) of Germany. None of them ever makes a comparative study, as he ought. There have been other periods of great art, and some of the best of them were in days of wide skepticism; such as the best Chinese and Persian periods, the Periclean age at Athens, the Age of Abd-er-Rahman III in Spain, and so on. What, if anything, is common to these ages is that they were, as a rule, a period when a nation expanded with a new vitality and wealth after a period of poverty and distress. The splendid art of the later Middle Ages falls under the same general explanation as the other more attractive features of the time.

If you look for facts, as a historian ought, the pretty inspirational theory melts away. One important writer on architecture, Leader Scott (*The Cathedral Builders*, 1899), concluded from the facts that the ancient Roman builders sheltered in the north of Italy, where the Ostrogoths and then the Lombards employed them, until the so-called Ottonian Renaissance, when they were drawn to Germany and created the Romanesque style by adapting their southern ideas to a northern clime. In any case, if we admitted the theory that religious inspiration was required, upon whom did it act? There may have been zeal but certainly not artistic inspiration in the masses of serfs who, under heavy clerical pressure, as we definitely know in many cases, carted and cut the stones and put them together. The great idea was in the minds of the architects. After considerable research I found the name — and this applies to the later cathedrals also — of only one great Romanesque architect. This was the bishop of Osnabruck, the architect of the beautiful Speyer cathedral; and he was one of the fighting, hard-drinking, and loose-living bishops of the time. The Gothic was gradually developed, slowly, from the Romanesque chiefly in the monasteries of the Paris district at a time when their loose living was notorious. The modern French are not notably puritanical but they have had to remove a lot of obscene gargoyles from the facades of their fine medieval cathedrals; while they read today with amazement of the indecent and riotous festivals (Feast of Fools, etc.) with which their medieval ancestors enlivened their cathedrals. In medieval Germany one of the names of the innumerable prostitutes was "cathedral girls." Naturally, the new history, which purports to tell us what the medieval folk really were like, knows nothing about these things.

So with the painting and sculpture. Are the pagan or secular paintings and sculpture of the great Renaissance artists less inspired than their religious art? An art critic would scoff at the suggestion. Many of the creators of religious works did not share the doctrines about them. No work is more famous than that of Michael Angelo in the Sistine Chapel,

yet it is doubtful if he believed in such doctrines as the last judgment; and here I gladly note that, while all the other historians write as if there had never been any question about his religion, Professor Lucas gives his readers a translation of the sonnet in which that great artist expresses his fiery scorn of the papacy. Most of them — some at considerable length — tenderly describe Giotto's frescoes in the shrine of Francis of Assisi, but not one of them, or any modern writer, tells how the famous biographer of the Renaissance artists, Vasari, gives in his work — it is cut out of English translations of the work — a poem in which Giotto, who wrote it while he was actually painting his frescoes, severely condemns the whole idea of the Franciscan life. Pinturicchio executed beautiful religious paintings in the Vatican in its loosest days, taking Alexander VI and his golden-haired Cicilea as his model, and he was as loose as they. No one questions that in some cases a deep religious faith in his theme helped the painter, but after all that has been written on the subject it is surprising to find any historian extending that to medieval art generally.

XXIX
The Corruption of The Friars

Apart from the civic and political advances, which had nothing to do with the church — Rome was the last city to advance — and a claim to progress in law, which remained semi-barbarous, the three glories usually assigned to the thirteenth century are the intellectual vitality (which was overwhelmingly of a theological character), the art (an expression of the growing wealth and mental freedom), and "the coming of the friars." Friar (*frater* or brother) was the name adopted by the new monks, the Franciscans and the Dominicans, as a sign that they did not even aspire to be priests and did not emulate the wealth, pomp, and worldliness of the older monastic bodies. Our historians assign touching motives for these new foundations, as that Francis was repelled by the vice and violence of the Italian cities (which the historians never otherwise mention), but the historical fact is that Rome knew so well the corruption of the existing monastic bodies that it was reluctant to sanction the Franciscan order. The Dominicans were welcomed, for, from the first, they were the G-men of the papacy.

Francis himself has a singularly large and luminous place in these profane manuals of history. On the historical scale he has not even the right to be mentioned. His life was entirely selfish — in the supernaturalist sense, of course — and all that he did for the world was to create a fraternity of men who degenerated before he himself died and for the next two or three centuries fouled the face of the land with hypocritical and very sensual monasteries. But our historians justify themselves in devoting so much attention to Francis of Assisi — some give him three pages and Frederic II a paragraph — on the ground that he was "one of the most beautiful characters of the Middle Ages" (Thorndike), even "one of the most remarkable and lovable characters that ever lived" (Lucas, p. 410). Professors Boak, Slosson, and Anderson, under the editorship of Professor Langer, say (212):

> The religious inspiration of the age cannot be as well shown even in the towering figure of the great Pope Innocent III, the fiery pen of Dante, the learned books of schoolmen, or the beauty of the cathedrals as in the story of St. Francis.

Apart from the unpardonable fault of extending the virtue of Francis to his age, one wonders in what authentic medieval writer they read the story. The first and official annals of the Franciscan order, by Father Luke Wedding, do not justify this language. One would almost wager that these historians have never read the story at all. They take the idea from modern Roman Catholic writers who draw upon the *Fioretti* or "Little Flowers of St. Francis"; and even the *Catholic Encyclopedia* will tell you that this is a piece of pious fiction written long after the death of Francis. He was a man of (once he had sown his wild oats) generous and emotional character, but his chief distinction from hundreds of other charitable men was that he had a peculiarly vivid belief in the gospel promise that if you denied yourself the good things of this world you would enjoy the best things of a better world for all eternity.

Unfortunately, our historians give their readers the impression that Francis gave the world a permanent brotherhood of virtue and austerity which added greatly to the fragrance of the Middle Ages. At least Professor Thompson knows better (p. 674): "With wealth the old familiar evils that had corrupted the older orders corrupted the Franciscans and Dominicans too." Sadly, even Professor Thompson goes on to say, as if apologizing to Roman Catholic readers: "Yet the great church of divine origin, but man-made in many ways, moved on. . . ." On what historical evidence does he know the church was of divine origin? I have repeatedly said that the chief recognized modern historian of the Franciscan order, Father Hoetzappel, candidly describes how the order became corrupt in a single generation. For the next two centuries critics and storytellers made endless fun of the hypocrisy and amours of the sleek friars.

The Dominicans, or followers of St. Dominic, started out as the "Order of Preachers," and that is still their official title. Our historians seem to imagine that these medieval folk, being solidly loyal in their belief — as I said, hundreds of thousands of heretics were massacred and, as Dante tells us, the urban middle class reeked with Epicureanism (or denial of immortality) — heard the Christian virtues impressed upon them in sermons every Sunday, as they now do. Such was the general character of the priests that the people would have smiled if this were the case. But it is a totally false assumption of folk whose admiration of the Middle Ages is larger than their knowledge. The priests gabbed the Latin ritual to them once a week and on a few holy days, and one could almost say that, as a rule, they cared nothing about the people's morals. There is no more eloquent witness to the general viciousness of the thirteenth century than Pope Innocent III, but he was too busy forging

the power of the church to do much about this. Dominic founded his fraternity as preachers to remedy the situation. They encountered so much unbelief or doctrinal indifference, that they easily became the agents of the Inquisition. Dominic himself was one of the leading preachers who had failed to make any impression on the Albigensians, and he had urged the pope to organize the great massacre. His pious callousness passed on to his followers, and there is no "Little Flowers of St. Dominic." But his order degenerated like the Franciscans, as we learn from the life of Albert the Great, and it remained corrupt. As late as 1770 we find the very religious bishop Ricci describing the incredible corruption of the Dominicans of Italy and saying in his *Memoirs* (of which there is an English translation, 1829) that "for a century and a half before this the total corruption of the Dominican order has been a matter of scandal throughout Tuscany." Rome severely persecuted him for his impudence.

XXX
The Trial of The Templars and The Pope

Although this famous trial was held in the next century, the appalling situation that is disclosed belongs to the beautiful thirteenth century and may be considered here. The Templars, or Knights of the Temple of Solomon, were one of the fighting orders of the monk-knights which were founded in the twelfth century to defend Jerusalem against the Moslems. As this was supposed to be the duty of the Crusaders who remained in Palestine, the reader may wonder why these special bodies had to be formed, but those of the new historians who mention (with high admiration) their appearance do not tell. There is no dispute about the fact that it was because the Crusaders became so corrupt and unwilling to fight that one pious knight invited the good men among them to join him in consecrating their chivalry to monastic vows. Eight knights — "brutal, pious, simple-minded men," says Professor Langlois — joined him. But in time it was seen to be a profitable business, and the order grew large and extremely wealthy. Their recruiting centers in Europe became rich and immense estates — districts of both Paris and London are still called "The Temple" — in which they lived luxuriously, not moving a finger when the Moslems finally recaptured Jerusalem. Their income in the thirteenth century was estimated at $30,000,000 a year. And in 1309 they were put on trial in France and their leaders executed; and all Europe was stirred to its depths by the enormity of the moral charges against them which the French court endorsed.

Only three or four of our new historians mention their trial, and they uniformly say that it was a travesty of justice and do not hint at any difference of opinion about the matter. The charges were "shameless," says Professor Thompson, and were "wanton inventions devised for propaganda purposes" (875), and even he does not clearly say that they were endorsed in a trial before the greatest lawyers and counsellors in France, and later by the pope. The charges were that sodomy was systematically practiced in all houses of the order, that novices had, at their initiation, to kiss the buttocks of the prior, that they were compelled to renounce Christianity and to worship an obscene idol. The only work in which the English reader will find a lengthy description of the trial is Dean Milman's *History of Latin Christianity* (1864, VII,

220-52); and the dean, being a good churchman, feels that a body of monks could not possibly be guilty of the worst charges. After the discovery, ratified in Roman Catholic courts, in 1936 that nearly all the Franciscan monasteries in Germany were comprehensively addicted to sodomy one cannot say that something a shade worse was not possible in the gross thirteenth century.

Whatever the truth may be, our historians gravely mislead their readers. It is certainly true that the French king mainly sought the property of the Templars, but no one would imagine from the flippancy with which the historians call the charges "wanton inventions" and "trumped-up charges" that a trial was held before the greatest judges in France and agents of the Inquisition, and that after hearing a long series of witnesses the Templars were found guilty by their judges and sentenced to death; that the French bishops and the doctors of Paris University supported the verdict; and that in suppressing the order the pope (who received his share of the spoils) endorsed the verdict and charges. It is true, also, that the knights and their chief authorities were subjected to atrocious tortures before they confessed — a fact which itself ought to tell the historians a little of the truth about their beautiful century — and that the Grand Master and three other masters of the order who confessed under torture later withdrew the confessions. But what sort of monks were these who would bring unparalleled infamy on their order and the church to be relieved from torture? Especially as they had no hope of escaping death.

The truth about the charges cannot be ascertained today. We have no means of checking the character of the witnesses, who were, for the most part, ex-members of the order. The *Cambridge Medieval History*, the first and most impartial history in the English language (if not in any language) — how curious that these new historians never quote it — points out that the Templars had been denounced to Rome for years, and the pope had ordered an enquiry in 1307. It reserves judgment and says (VII, 316): "However mixed may have been the motives for this attack there were plenty of reputable reasons to put forward." At least that they were, as celibate communities so often have been, systematic sodomists can hardly be doubted. But my charge against the historians is that they completely misrepresent, when they do not suppress, the trial.

It is the same with the posthumous trial of Pope Boniface VIII, which took place in France three years later. Again there is a plausible excuse. The French king, who demanded the trial, mortally hated Boniface. So few of our historians mention the trial, and the one or two airily reject

the charges. He was, says Professor Langer, "a skeptic in religion (which is known only from the trial) but not so vicious as contemporary propaganda represents him" (222). "Propaganda" is a strange word for a solemn trial by the heads of the French church and the leading lawyers. Professor Thompson grants that Boniface was "greedy, arrogant and bad-tempered," praises him in some respects, and says nothing about the trial; nor do any of the others. Perhaps they would appeal to Gregorovius who, by a rare blunder, acquits the pope of vice on the ground that he was eighty years old. Even the *Catholic Encyclopedia* admits that he was only sixty-eight years old when he died.

What happened was that in the course of their quarrel King Philip gathered evidence in Rome to prove that Boniface, the Pope whose reign (1294-1303) puts the crown on this remarkable century — it was he who invented the jubilee year — was a thorough skeptic and cynically immoral. The witnesses were, for the most part, Roman priests or lawyers. The French bishops and university doctors and leading lawyers agreed that Boniface was guilty, and the king sent troops to Italy to arrest him. He died — some contemporaries say by his own hand — in a fit of temper. The king then secured, by bribery, the election of a French cardinal and demanded a general council of the church to judge Boniface. The chief charges were that he had not only scoffed at the fundamental Christian doctrines but did not believe in immortality, and that he said that "there is no more harm in adultery than in rubbing one's hands together." There was a charge, on public evidence, of several murders; and in the case of his predecessor this may have been true. A council of the French church was convened, and some writers borrow the statement from the *Catholic Encyclopedia* that it acquitted Boniface. This is one of its many lies. The prelates never examined the evidence. They were so appalled at the prospect of telling the world, which had been prostrate at his feet only a few years before, that the pope was a thorough skeptic, adulterous, and possibly a murderer, that they persuaded the king — probably hinting that it might help him to get the great wealth of the Templars if he did not press for a verdict — to drop the matter. Such was the crown of the spiritual, beautiful, unique century. It is the general opinion of historians who are not of the "new" school that Boniface was guilty. The *Cambridge Medieval History* thus sums up their verdict (VII, 5): "The evidence seems conclusive that he was doctrinally a skeptic, and it is probable that for him, as later for Alexander VI, the moral code had little meaning." But again I am concerned only to point out that the public is duped when it is told that this is just propaganda, or when they read pages about Boniface VIII without a single word about these grave charges.

XXXI
The Avignon Popes

These outstanding and monstrous events of the thirteenth century — the Albigensian and Waldensian massacres, the sack of Constantinople, the establishment of the Inquisition, the corruption of the Templars, and the election to the papal office when, as all admit, papal power reached its height, of a cynical skeptic — which are either ignored or completely misrepresented by the new historians, show you how they repeatedly reach a verdict that is so pleasing to our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens. Such developments could not occur except in a cruel and corrupt age, and we have, as I said, abundant evidence that that *was* the character of the thirteenth century. I say coldly that instead of being, as they say, "the greatest in the history of humanity," the "equal of the age of Pericles," it was one of the most cruel in history and, from the angle of the church's own moral code, the most immoral. There are much shorter periods — that of Nero, for instance — in history that were as bad, but not, apart from the Dark Age, a period of a hundred years.

And in social-moral character, which seems to be of so little interest to our new historians, there was little or no change in the next two or three centuries, and no change in the record of them in the new history. We are asked to abandon the ideas of a Renaissance and a Reformation, as we shall see presently. These great developments, which closed the long stretch of the Middle Ages, were, they say, not "sudden explosions"; they had their roots in the preceding centuries. As a matter of fact, no historian ever said otherwise, but the really singular thing is that these new historians — who think that we have ignored, or are ignorant of, these roots in earlier centuries — either ignore, or are ignorant of, since they at the most give only a few colorless lines to them, five important developments of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries which certainly count as roots of the Reformation.

The first is the "Babylonian captivity," or the residence of the popes at Avignon in France, from 1309 to 1327, and the complete degradation of the papal court. Some of our historians (Barnes, Lucas, etc.) do not think this worth mentioning; some dismiss it in a few lines as an event of no significance (Langer, Boak, Geise), while others venture to hint at

"pomp and luxury" or "extravagance." Professor Thompson alone warns his readers (958-9):

> The court of Avignon became a maze of fanatical bureaux, each staffed with an army of officials, and the pickings and cheatings from the income of every one of these bureaux were enormous. Hence the prodigality, the luxury, the gay and licentious life of the multitude of clergy there assembled. It would be a narrow view, however, to hold the popes responsible for this state of things. The whole church must be indicted.

The entire age was so bad, he adds, that "one may understand and be tolerant of the church in this epoch." Heads, we win; tails, you lose, again. We read in nearly every chapter of the new history how the papacy guided and inspired the world all through those centuries, but when the historian, for some reason or other, however rarely, admits the corruption of the papacy he blames it on the corrupt world, and he takes practically no notice of the foul means which the popes used to destroy the revolt against them that breaks out continuously. In the thirteenth century it was the hundreds of thousands of the Albigensians and Waldensians. In the fifteenth century it was the millions of Lollards, Hussites, witches, and other bodies.

Yet even Professor Thompson does not by any means give an adequate idea of the evil. Not only were vast sums collected and spent at Avignon, but they were largely got by corrupt means. Sacred offices were sold to the highest bidder, and swarms of aspirants filled the courts. Under Pope Clement VI these purchasers of rich benefits haunted the palaces of the countess of Turenne through whom — a pious Roman Catholic contemporary, Villani, assures us that she was Clement's mistress and that she and other ladies attended not only his rich banquets and hunts but the morning audiences in his bedroom — the pope transacted his business with them.

But the story was foul from the start. Avignon had belonged to Queen Giovanna of Naples, and the pope made it a condition of her getting absolutions for her numerous and picturesque sins (including murder) that she should sell the palace and city and the whole surrounding region to the papacy for the paltry sum of $200,000. When the French king bribed the cardinals to elect a French pope, he, Clement V, was crowned in Lyons. He consented to the use of torture on the Templars and got a large part of their property, and he went to live at Avignon, which was then just outside France. By the new and sordid system of

papal finance he was able at his death to leave $2,500,000, and all of it went to his relatives. So low had the papacy fallen that the bitter fights for the prize lasted two years, and a dry and avaricious French lawyer got it. He raised the tainted income to at least $1,000,000 a year — we have his account books — after living on such a scale that he spent $40,000 a year on his stable and wardrobe. He did not spend enough, and bishops and cardinals conspired to murder him.

The next Avignon pope is counted a good man though it was his drinking which gave rise to the saying in France "As drunk as a pope"; but he lasted only a few years, and his successor, Clement VI, a notorious lady-chaser, is said to have opened his infamous papal career with the words, "My predecessor did not know how to live," and for ten years the vast palace of the popes was like that of an oriental sultan.

At that time Petrarch, the greatest literary man of the age, was an exile from Italy and lived near Avignon. In a little Latin work, *Letters Without a Title* (though no one has ever ventured to translate them into English) he has left us a picture of vice in the papal court and the city that is almost without parallel in history. The city, he says, "was swept along in a flood of the most obscene pleasures, an incredible storm of debauch, the most terrible and unprecedented shipwreck of chastity," and the pope who smiled upon it all was "an ecclesiastical Dionysius with his obscene and infamous artifices" (*Letter VIII*).

What do our historians make of this? You can guess. All but one or two of them suppress it, and the one or two brush aside this indictment by the greatest Roman Catholic scholar of the age as lightly as you brush off a fly. Petrarch, they say, was annoyed because the pope would not return to Rome — so he penned fifty pages of the most scalding accusation of vice that was ever written! They do not seem to be aware — scarcely any document exposing the vice of the period is translated into English, and I venture to think that scarcely one of these historians reads Italian or Latin — that Villani confirms this, that a modern French physician, Dr. L. LePileur, compiled a work (not translated) on prostitution from the official documents of the city which exposes the appalling state of things (monks and nuns owning the brothels for the clergy); or that the leading Roman Catholic historian, Dr. Pastor, says of the later Middle Ages in his 30-volume history of the popes (I.97) that in the fourteenth century "the prevailing immorality exceeded anything that had been witnessed since the tenth century" and "that cruelty and vindictiveness went hand in hand with immorality." They are at least aware that just at this time John Wycliffe started an evangelical or Protestant anti-papal movement in England which won the support of

half a million of the two million adult inhabitants of the country, and its chief argument in appealing to the people was the corruption of the papacy. Yet almost the only one of the new historians who notices the scandal of Avignon, Professor Thompson, says (p. 957):

> The French popes have been given a bad name in history, but the malign attribution need not be unreservedly accepted. In any case, the popes themselves may be exculpated from blame. The evil of church corruption is to be found in the general condition of the age. Actually, neither the church nor the papacy was more corrupt than the secular princes and governments of the time.

Could there be a sterner or more sweeping indictment of the age which the Roman Catholics press upon us as a model age? And what do you think of the plea that such popes as Clement VI must not be blamed because they were merely as vicious as the world they were supposed to inspire? But Europe was not all as bad as this. In my recent *Judged* I have shown that numbers of lay Roman Catholics have left us confessions of profound disgust at the behavior of the popes, and of these I will say more presently. Professor Hulme observes that "corruption in every rank of the hierarchy is the constant theme of Catherine of Siena" (p. 16). And this was just the beginning of 350 years, with a few periods of relief, of papal corruption.

XXXII
The Great Schism

While our historians unanimously toss aside the indictment of the popes by the most gifted and most eminent Italian of that age, Petrarch, the man who stands next to Dante in Italian literature, some of them dwell at length on a Roman Catholic legend of a zealous nun, Catherine of Siena, to whom I have just referred, going to Avignon and ordering the pope in the name of god to desert the fleshpots of Avignon and the enormous and superb palace that is still pointed out to visitors, for the decaying Chair of Peter and the impoverished city of Rome. Catherine did go to Avignon, but it was the ugly prospect of a revolt of the Romans that moved the pope. Accustomed for ages to live on the papal income and pilgrims, Rome had now fallen so low that sheep and goats browsed on the grass that grew in the main streets. It threatened once more to become a secular republic.

But the "Sacred College," the cardinal-doctors, had become so deeply tainted that almost every election of the popes from 1200 to 1600 was a fierce struggle, with bloodshed in the streets and heavy bribery in the chamber. This is another of those details of the age which our historians decline to notice. They have described the solemn and picturesque procedure of the election of a pope — the cardinals sealed with their beds in a room and invoking the guidance of the Holy Ghost — and they let their readers suppose that this was still an impressive ceremony. What is worse, the sixty-eight years' scandal of Avignon was followed by the thirty-eight years of the Great Schism, when, to the anger of Christendom, two, sometimes three, men claimed simultaneously to be the real Vicar of Christ, and their greed and the low character of most of them nearly brought on the Reformation a century before Luther was born.

This second most significant event of the fourteenth century, which rocked Christendom more violently than the orgies of Avignon had done, gets even less notice from our historians. One (Lucas) mildly remarks that it was a "scandal." Several (Barnes, Geise, etc.) do not mention it, and the others dismiss it in a few lines. None of them say anything about the character of the popes; and readers are left to think that there were just technical flaws in the elections and that each man

honestly believed that it was upon him that the Holy Ghost had laid the responsibility; instead of the quarrel being, as it was, due to the feud of the French and the Italian cardinals and the greed of each man for the enormously-enlarged income of the papacy.

The schism lasted, as I said, thirty years, and we have a thoroughly reliable account of it by a lawyer who was in the suite of the Italian pope, Dietrich of Neim. All Rome howled outside the windows while the French and Italian cardinals cursed each other for days, and the people at last broke into the sealed chamber, ate the food and drank the wine of the cardinals, and told them to get on with it and choose an Italian. The Holy Ghost also ran. They elected Urban VI. But a number of the cardinals got away, in spite of the soldiers who waited to cut them up, and elected the Frenchman Clement VII.

Someone has said that the only difference between them was that Urban was a vindictive and unscrupulous young blackguard. Clement had been a commander of the pope's army, and at Cesena, which he took, he had closed the gates and had his troops murder every man, woman and child in it; which took three appalling days and nights, as the citizens, according to some authorities, numbered 30,000. Each pope had an army and they fought each other with the customary savagery, the popes lighting up the land with their mutual anathemas. Urban, the papal income being reduced by his rival, remembered the crimes of Queen Joanna of Naples, who had practically bought absolution by selling Avignon cheap to the papacy. He awarded her kingdom to the Hungarians (at a price) and made no objection when they executed her. He went down to Naples for his reward with his favorite nephew who, says Dietrich, "thought of nothing but gluttony, pleasure, luxury and lust"; in Naples he (the nephew) raped a nun and dragged her from the convent to make her his mistress — the pope replying to all remonstrances that the boy was young (he was forty). But the pope's greed so angered the new king that he drove him from Naples and then beseiged him, while Urban spluttered anathemas from the battlements of his nephew's great castle. The pope's cardinals, driven with him in disgrace from one place to another, plotted to depose him and he had them repeatedly and most savagely tortured, and as they later disappeared from a ship in which they accompanied him in his flight, there is serious reason to accept the rumor that he had them thrown overboard. His bursts of rage were fiendish, and good authorities say that in the end the Romans murdered him (as the *Catholic Encyclopedia* admits).

This was the "legitimate" pope; these were the first eleven years of the great schism. The French pope had been living in luxury in France

for sixteen years when the University of Paris persuaded the king to demand his resignation and make an end of the great schism, whereupon he brought on a fatal attack of apoplexy in a fit of temper. Meantime, the Italian cardinals had elected Benedict IX as the legitimate pope. In his scramble for wealth, largely to enrich his relatives, this holy father turned the papal headquarters into a sort of blend of a stock exchange and a gambling house. Spies would report when a bishop, or even a parish priest with a good income, was seriously ill, the office was offered in anticipation to all bidders. If, Dietrich says, after one man had bought the "expectation" another came along with a bigger offer, it was sold to him; but the first man's money was kept as he had "attempted to cheat the pope." Dietrich saw the same office sold three times in a week, and he was an official in the court. He tells us that in the jubilee year, 1400, Rome indulged in an orgy of rape (especially of lady-pilgrims) and plunder. Boniface kept the fair going merrily until he approached death in 1404, but I am glad to say that he died in an odor of virtue. His Jewish physician told him that the only remedy for his disease was a little fornication, and he refused.

Two or three short-lived elderly popes followed, and Europe was now divided between laughter and scorn as these old men, driven on by the indignation of their followers, alternately moved nearer to some city which was appointed for reconciliation and scurried back to their treasures. In the year 1410 all Christendom was appalled to learn that the Italian pope having died, the Roman cardinals had been bribed to elect the man who had been the chief organizer of the corrupt fiscal system; a notorious rake, a man who some contemporaries insist had begun his career as a Neapolitan pirate. There had been such popes in the tenth and eleventh centuries, but Europe was then still in the Dark Age. Considering that it was now in the full blaze of the Renaissance, we may say that John XXIII, the pope elected (after imploring the light of the Holy Ghost) in this supreme crisis of the church, was the vilest of the long series of bad popes. I venture to say that, although in his case it is from a supreme church council of the greatest importance that we learn his character, no reader of the new history has the least idea of it. I will give the awful indictment presently.

XXXIII
The Council of Constance

If any reader should wish to apply here the kindly theory of Professor Thompson that the popes must be exculpated from blame if they were no worse than the age in which they lived, I will quote a few words on the character of this age from Professor E. M. Hulme's admirable work, *The Renaissance, The Protestant Revolution, and The Catholic Reformation* (1914). You will see from the date that this work was written before the new history dawned upon America, but it has the compensating virtue of candor, which many of us consider of high value in history. He says about the first half of the fourteenth century (p. 13):

> The moral state of Latin Christendom matched that of its temporary capital (Avignon). Everywhere immorality was increasing. The immorality of the city on the Rhone, despite its thousand belfries, had become a byword throughout Europe. . . . Among clergy and laity alike immorality had spread like a plague. The Franciscan revival was a thing forgotten, and the preaching friars of St. Dominic had themselves fallen into the most deplorable degeneration. Among the monastic and secular clergy alike, monks and nuns, prelates, and priests, moral corruption was rampant.

Of the next century he writes:

> Long before the fall of Constantinople (1453) the history of southeastern Europe had been an unbroken record of warfare and pillage. The crimes commonly attributed to the Turks, treachery and cruelty, were more characteristic of the conquered than the conquerer.

I have already quoted how the leading Roman Catholic historian of the recent times, Dr. L. Pastor, acknowledges this, and he is content to plead that there were, nevertheless, large numbers of good men and women in all parts of Christendom. Of course, there were. No one ever disputed that. Indeed, in my recent book *Judged,* an anthology of

indictments of Rome throughout the centuries, I show this more plainly than any other historian does, quoting fiery condemnations of the papacy and the hierarchy from a number of the most learned and most respected men of the day. About 1400, Cardinal d'Ailly, a strict prelate and head of the group of eminent scholars at Paris University, wrote a book with the title *On The Squalor of The Church*. The rector of the University, Dr. Clemanges, wrote what Pastor calls "a celebrated work" entitled *On The Corrupt State of The Church*. Gerson, the Chancellor, even more famous throughout Europe than either, wrote several books in still stronger language.

In our historians one does read of a conciliar movement at this period, or a demand that general councils of the church should have authority over the popes and conduct that reform and guidance of the church which they neglected. But our historians represent this only as an attempt to put an end to the schism whereas in fact the movement was a concentration of the burning indignation of all the really religious elements in Europe at the state of the church, and they were powerful enough to enlist the aid of the Roman Catholic princes. They first met at Piza in 1409 and heavily denounced the immorality of the clergy as well as the scandal of the schism. The secretary of the council, the future "great pope" Pius II, though he was not many years out of his licentious youth, in his *Commentaries* tells us that the austere bishop John of Lubeck, whom the emperor had appointed his spokesman at the council, said:

> Scarcely one priest in every thousand will be found chaste; all live in concubinage or adultery or something worse (sodomy or incest) and administer the sacraments in a state of pollution.

He and others urged that the law of clerical celibacy had brought degradation upon the church and ought to be repealed. But the thunders of the council passed unheeded. It was in the following year that the cardinals outraged whatever sense of decency there was by electing John XXIII. So they prevailed upon the emperor to convoke and preside at a great council of the church at Constance in 1414.

Emperor Sigismund, notoriously a lascivious person himself, was rather an incongruous president, and from the contemporary descriptions of the state of the clergy we wonder how many of the 29 cardinals, 33 archbishops, 134 abbots, and 100 doctors of law and divinity who attended were in an ideal condition to discharge their virtuous task. In fact Kitto, in his lengthy account of the council (*Pope John The Twenty-*

third and Master John Huss) quotes a contemporary witness that 1,000 prostitutes flocked to Constance from all parts for the duration of the council! It was this council that drew up the lengthy indictment of the moral character of John XXIII. In Mansi's *Collection of The Councils (Vol. XXVII)* it runs to twelve folio pages, but the reader will probably have enough if I select a few clauses, which I translate literally:

> Pope John XXIII was, from his youth, when he was called Baldassari Cossa, of an evil disposition, irreverent, lewd, a liar, a rebel against his parents, disobedient, and steeped in vice. He got promotion through corruption. While he was Cardinal of St. Eustace and legate at Bologna he governed the city and people tyrannically, inhumanly, impiously and cruelly. [Dietrich says that he violated two hundred girls and matrons there and extracted protection-money from the gamblers and prostitutes.] In his evil ambition for the papacy he plotted the death of the pope. As Pope he despised the divine offices and fasts. He was an oppressor of the poor, a persecutor of justice, a pillar of iniquity, a statue of simony, devoted to the flesh, a cesspool of vice, alien from virtue, while given to sleep and carnal desires. He was guilty of incest with nuns and with his brother's wife, raped virgins, committed adultery with matrons.

Altogether an unpleasant person for a holy father, but our historians do not say a word about his character and that of the cardinals who elected him and the republic of Venice which bribed them to do so. The council deposed him (and the two other popes) and sent him to a pleasant retirement as if he had merited a comfortable pension, and it burned the noble reformer, John Huss, who had been attracted to Constance by the grant of an imperial safe-conduct. A new pope, Martin V, was elected to reform the church, which he earnestly promised, and the 400 prelates and abbots and the thousand gay ladies scattered to their pleasant homes. But there was no moral reform of the church, and within fifty years the papal court was as foul as ever — which, again, the new history does not care to tell. If it told a tithe of the truth about the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries it would have to modify considerably its fine new theory of the Reformation.

XXXIV
The Renaissance

But before we consider these popes of the Renaissance I must say a few words about the position of the Renaissance itself in the new history. The word is as everybody knows, the French for *rebirth*, and it has two meanings in modern literature. It may refer to either the rebirth of civilization or the rebirth of classical (Greek and Roman) literature. From what we have already seen, the reader will understand that the new historians are reluctant to admit it in either sense. According to them, civilization was reborn in the days of Charlemagne (about 800), again in the days of the emperor Otto, and then in the twelfth century, and it was at its height in the thirteenth century. In fact, most of them say it had never died so it did not need to be born again. As to the classic revival, they say, the industrious monks had preserved the classics for us, and Professor Thompson has described for us scores of episcopal and monastic libraries with a section of classical works all through both earlier and later Middle Ages. Some of them say that history would do well to strike out the words "The Renaissance" and "The Reformation" which loomed so large in the European chronicles until American historians got to work on them — with the torchlight of modern Roman Catholic scholarship.

Let us first consider the rebirth of classical literature. As ninety percent of the people of Europe were still illiterate I have myself never exaggerated the influence of this in the advance of the sixteenth century, but to the new historian who scornfully says that after all it was "only an appeal to the dead past" we may point out that it certainly inspired humanism (which we will consider presently), which, though its voice was drowned in the roar of the theological controversy, contributed some of the best ideas of the revolt. It is, however, surprising to find so sober and independent a representative of the new school as Professor Harry Elmer Barnes so belittling the classical revival as to favor the idea that in this sense we might drop the word *Renaissance* altogether. One section of his thirteenth chapter has the bold title "The Renaissance Myth." He explains that he is combating the older idea that the Renaissance and the Reformation were sudden "cultural explosions" or "catastrophic in origin." They had their roots in earlier ages,

and until the new history "little attempt was made to trace their antecedents back to the Middle Ages" (546). He says:

> This (older) approach is in disrepute among up-to-date historians of our generation. In fact, even the terms Renaissance and Reformation are being dropped on the valid ground that they are unhistorical and misleading to students of history. Few historical notions have undergone more of a change in the last generation than the conception of a Renaissance of thought and culture between 1350 and 1600.

As representatives of the old discredited history he names Michelet (who wrote about 1820), Burckhardt (about 1850), and Symonds (1875). Why do none of these reformers of history ever refer to the *Cambridge History*, the finest historical work in the English language? Because it gives masses of facts which they refuse to give and so comes to sounder conclusions on all points. Symonds and Burckhardt are authorities on the Renaissance, not on its antecedents, and on the earlier age they merely reflect that it was generally dark in comparison — a literary and artistic comparison — with the Renaissance. Michelet alone covers the earlier as well as the later period, and while any writer of 125 years ago invites criticism, he by no means represents that all Europe was dark until the fourteenth century. Professor Barnes complains that they overlook the intellectual awakening personified by Abelard. Michelet (like the others) does it full justice and rightly complains that the church stifled it. But I will return presently to this point.

As a matter of fact, it is just in connection with the classical revival that we see best the weakness of the new theory of European development. The old historians, Barnes says, overlooked the great figure of Bishop Fulbert of Chartres and the classical studies which he initiated about the year 1000. His readers might understand better the sudden appearance of this bishop in the field of culture if Professor Barnes explained to them that Fulbert studied under Gerbert who (see an earlier section) got his learning in semi-Arab Barcelona and the Arab colleges of Cordova. But if we turn to the exhaustive work on medieval libraries of Professor Thompson we find that classical literature was the least of Fulbert's interests. His episcopal school at Chartres had for a time a high reputation in France, though insignificant in comparison with that of Abelard a century later, but his library as far as can be traced contained only seven Latin classics and no Greek. Thompson may well say (335) that the classics were "not well represented in it."

Another of our historians quotes the monastic library of the abbey of Bobbio. This was nearer to the sphere of Greek and Arab culture. Yet, amongst its 660 books it had only fifteen classical works. And it is expressly stated that the Chartres and other libraries bought classics from Lombardy.

As we saw, none of these medieval libraries before the twelfth century, when trade in books became easier like all other trades, had more than 1,600 works (including duplicates) and never more than a score of Latin classics among them. A modern collection of the classics like Treubner's runs to about 400 volumes. That should be enough to discredit all this nonsense about the monks and the classics. A historian should know that from Petrarch and Boccaccio onward there was a feverish search for the classics in the dust of the monasteries and in the East, and it made such discoveries that the period is justly called the Rebirth of the Classics. It took a century and a half for Italian scholars, whose industry and devotion were a hundred times greater than that of the monks, to get together the collection of the classics that we have today.

To what extent this revival of classical literature helped the revival of civilization we leave open. The immense amount of pagan work executed by the great painters and sculptors shows how it helped artistically, but it was only after the power of Rome had been broken by the Reformation that the social ideals of the ancients got a hearing. Our historians are most concerned about the reality of the works of Plato and Aristotle, and they mattered least of all. The world was waiting for the revival of the ideas of the Ionic-Epicurean school, which for most of our historians do not seem to have existed. In any case the revival of civilization in Europe began, as we saw, long before the beginning of the search for classics (about 1330), and the assumption of the new history that this was ever questioned by a historian is false.

In fact they themselves are more guilty. They talk a lot about temporary brighter areas, which were never denied, such as in the time of Charlemagne or Otto, and hardly give a line to the high and lasting cultural influence of the Lombard kings in north Italy from the eighth century which, in spite of the stifling grip of the popes, was never lost in that region. It was from Lombardy that both Charlemagne and Otto's brother got their best teachers. It is in the north Italian cities that the revived civilization made its greatest progress and when the corruption and tyranny of Rome encouraged the growth of vices in these cities, it was still here that science best advanced.

After what we have seen about the condition of Christian Europe in

the Dark Age it would be an absurdity to say that there was not a revival of civilization, which is the Renaissance in its widest sense, from about the middle of the eleventh century. And if we take a broad European view of this instead of fixing upon particular areas like Saxony or Chartres, we understand it. Four influences met in the south of France and the north of Italy. The Ottonian culture, which we trace to the Byzantine (through the marriage of Otto II to a Greek princess), and the Lombard reached northern France at least in the shape of a zeal for a higher architecture (the Romanesque), and this, in time, met and blended with the much stronger and intellectually broader influence from Arab-Spain. From Sicily a different civilizing influence crept up Italy from the fine Arab civilization on that island, and the Greek influence grew stronger as the Turks narrowed the Greek empire and drove scholars and artists to the Italian ports and cities.

The truth is that the new history is embarrassed by its own misrepresentations. Eager to prove that the Dark Age, which in the last century was a powerful Protestant argument against the Roman church, is a myth, they describe the older history as making it stretch from the fifth to the fifteenth century. See the earlier section on the Dark Ages. Even the learned Professor Haskins explicitly does this. Dr. Ford, head of the University of Minnesota, says in the introduction he writes to Sellery and Krey's *Medieval Foundations of Western Civilization* (1929) that earlier historians meant by the Dark Age "the period between Romulus Augustus and Richelieu," or A.D. 475 to 1620. Not one of them ever quotes a historian who extends the Dark Age beyond 1100. But by so extending it you can make great fun of the supposed historians who call the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries dark and barbarous.

And they make the confusion worse by saying, as they all say, that these older historians represent Europe in the Dark Age as "uniformly dark." Again, except for Dr. Barnes's unfortunate reference to three historians who wrote respectively 100, 70, and 50 years before the new history was born, they never name the historical sinners. Professor Lucas says that until the new history said "Let there be light" the whole stretch to the year 1300 was "thought a barren period." By whom? He does not say. I have earlier quoted the scornful language of Professor Thompson and others. Professors Wallbank and Taylor say (I. 435):

> Until recent times men have looked upon the age which bears the name Renaissance as a "sudden turning on of the light after some centuries of darkness." Today we know that the Middle

> Ages were anything but a Dark Age because medieval thought and art made rich contributions to our modern culture.

They have the usual wrong conception of the date of the Dark Age. Professor Barnes quotes with admiration this passage from Professor Thorndike's *Science and Thought in The Fifteenth Century* (p. 9):

> The old slurs and disparaging generalizations at the expense of the Middle Ages are now repeated only by mechanical creatures of habit, by those who stopped thinking and reading 20 to 30 years ago and who refuse to give up the catchword of prejudice that was instilled into their minds in childhood. Candid enquirers are becoming increasingly convinced that the true Renaissance was around the twelfth rather than the fifteenth century, that the medieval Latin and Scholasticism possessed great merits, that Gothic painting had been neglected just as Gothic architecture and sculpture once were; that democracy and popular education decayed rather than advanced in early modern times; that organized charity and care of public health received much attention in medieval times.

Apart from the fact that we have here the same confusion of dates the list of merits of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is inflated. I do not know how well these historians, who tell us that the theological Latin of the thirteenth century is superior to the language of Cicero and to the Neoclassical Latin of the humanists, knew Latin. I have read plenty of all these and am amazed. I found one writer attempting to quote the Latin epithet, *Stupor mundi,* (which means "wonder of the world") which even bishops applied to Frederic II. He gives it as *Stuporum mundi,* which means "the fornication of the world." Our philosophers, (except perhaps, at Princeton) do not seem to have changed their minds about the Scholastics, nor do our artists generally announce discoveries of great paintings before Giotto. That, in view of the great expansion of the cities, a few hospitals were founded we know, but for the value of the few hospitals and the state of sanitation we refer them to the appalling ravages of the epidemics of the time. As to democracy, the only point I can see in the remark is that the popes tried to suppress it in the nineteenth century as they had done in the twelfth.

In short, our professors insist with special vehemence here that they have effected a great reform in the teaching of history, and that those of us who do not accept their own estimate of their work are twenty years

out of date (or were twenty years ago), muddle-headed, or ignorant. Put in the careful language of Dr. Barnes, their contention is that until about thirty years ago historians taught that the earlier Middle Ages were "uniformly" dark, stagnant, and barbarous, and that the Renaissance in the fifteenth century came as a "sudden cultural explosion," not a development with roots in the earlier centuries.

I flatly deny that history taught anything of the sort. That it did not speak of the Dark Age as "uniformly" dark I showed in an earlier section. But Dr. Barnes refers us to Michelet, Symonds, and Burckhardt for proof of his statements. Not one of the three wrote general European history. Michelet's great work is his *History of France*, and the other two wrote on the Renaissance in Italy. However, it is enough to say that not one even of these three calls the period before the classical revival uniformly dark, and not one fails to point out that the rebirth of European civilization was only an acceleration of the pace of a movement that had proceeded for centuries. Sometimes they use the very language in which Professor Thornton formulates the "new discovery."

In the introduction to the ninth volume of his *History of France* Michelet has a section with the title "The Era of The Renaissance," and in a footnote to this he says: "We ought certainly to take the twelfth century as this era." He pays a high compliment to its culture and says that it was really "the end of the Middle Ages." Not only has he in an earlier volume done full justice to the intellectual vitality of the age of Abelard but it is one of his most definite opinions that the medieval spirit was mortally smitten repeatedly in the twelfth, the thirteenth, and the fourteenth centuries, but the papacy revitalized it for a time.

Burckhardt begins his *Renaissance of Italy* at the fourteenth century but in his rare glances back at the earlier period he fully admits that they led up to the revival of civilization. He said, forty years before the new historians announced that they had discovered a Carolingian Renaissance, that the activity which Charlemagne aroused was essentially a Renaissance, as was also the era of the Romanesque and the period of the Ottos. Of the thirteenth century he writes (I, 182, in the 1878 translation): "At the close of the thirteenth century Italy began to swarm with individuality, the charm laid upon human personality was dissolved." And he denies that the recovery of the Latin and Greek classics was the great cause: "It was not the revival of antiquity alone but its union with genius of the Italian people." John Addington Symonds, the highest British authority on the Renaissance in Italy, is equally emphatic that the classical revival did not cause a sudden

explosion. He says (1880 edition, p. 3): "The Renaissance was a natural movement not to be explained by this or that characteristic, but to be accepted as an effort of humanity for which, at length, the time had come." It is true that he refers to the period before 1100 as the Dark Age, but he explains that he means this in comparison with the later Middle Ages. He says that "to depreciate the work achieved during the Middle Ages would be ridiculous." He is chiefly concerned with the intellectual advance, and it is only by concealing the facts about the general condition of the period A.D. 500 to 1050 that you can quarrel with a historian for calling this the Dark Age. Thus these, the only historians mentioned as holding these views that the new history is supposed to have discredited, explicitly disavow those views.

XXXV
The Humanists

I have discussed the Renaissance at some length because in repudiating so strongly what they call the older view of it the new historians are preparing the reader for a new theory of the Reformation. Whether the recovery of the classics was or was not an important inspiration of the advance in the fifteenth century does not seem to matter very much, and the social student of history is not greatly concerned if the roots of the advance in earlier ages was found — as they have not been — to be deeper than was once assumed. But there is one element of the Renaissance to which we must give a brief separate consideration before we pass on to the Reformation. This is the appearance of a group of writers who are known as the Humanists.

Many of our historians do not seem to know what this name meant at the time. It was not a movement, properly speaking, like modern humanism: a campaign to divert men from theology by inviting them, on the lines of Alexander Pope's words, "The proper study of man is man," to concentrate on human interests. The Humanists were men who devoted themselves to what was called "the more human literature" (which meant chiefly the classics) as distinct from theological or philosophical. As in those days philosophy was understood to be "the servant of theology," the distinction fairly corresponds to our distinction between sacred and profane literature.

But the classics included moralists (Seneca, Cicero, Epictetus), philosophers (Plato, Aristotle) as well as poets (the greater part) and historians, so the Humanists were diverse in their interests. The majority in the fifteenth century were poets or essayists with free ideas about sex and probably no real religious belief. Some devoted themselves to philosophy and, as the professors at all the universities were narrow followers of Aristotle, they took to Plato; and from some of the works of Plato a few of them went on to adopt social ideals and to protest against the gross moral and social evils of the time which the church failed to rebuke.

The only point of interest here, a point which the new historians ignore, is the different attitude of the popes to the two types of Humanists. The poets and essayists of the erotic type were generally in favor

with the popes. Poggio Bracciolini, one of the earliest, author of a (frequently indecent) *Book of Jokes* that became immensely popular, was one of the chief secretaries for thirty years of Martin V, the pope who was appointed by the council of Constance to reform the church. Martin made no attempt to do so, and Poggio explains that the room in the Vatican which was allotted to the secretaries was popularly known as "Lie Factory" and from the conversation in it he collected his loose and anticlerical stories. Filelfo, author of (says Symonds) "one of the most nauseous compositions that coarse spite and filthy fancy ever spawned," received a subsidy and $5,000 from Pope Nicholas V. Piccolomini became a cardinal and then Pope (Pius II). Bibbiena, author of some of the loosest comedies of the time, became a cardinal and intimate friend of Leo X, who had his comedies performed at the Vatican. One of the ablest of them, Borenzo Valla, was, it is true, hated by the popes and brought to his knees, but he had turned to history and proved that the temporal power of the popes was based upon a shameless forgery and had made vicious attacks on the papal pretensions.

On the other hand, the serious Humanists found no favor at the papal court. The leading classical scholar in Italy, Platina, was jailed and tortured. Another, Pemponazzi, a wealthy noble who took to philosophy, and a score of others who used to meet for discussion in his palace, were imprisoned. Count Pico della Mirandola, Platonist philosopher and one of the most learned men and finest characters of the time, was denounced to the Inquisition.

Towards the close of the century, many of the Humanists became humanitarians or social idealists, and these found no favor with the church. Erasmus is usually conceived by those who know nothing of his vast scholarship as a frivolous wit, but he wrote, among other things, a most earnest attack on war (*This Plaint of Peace*), the worst social evil of the time. He was an intimate friend of Thomas More, who in later years became a Roman Catholic martyr but was in his prime a valiant Humanist and anticlerical, though he had to disguise his authorship of his famous *Utopia*. Montaigne, finest interpreter of the best spirit of the ancients, had to keep an eye on the ecclesiastical authorities all through his essays. Giordano Bruno, the ex-monk who tried to bring the race back to the Ionic-Epicurean line of thought — "the only great Italian of the sixteenth century and the greatest pure intelligence since Aristotle" says J. A. Symonds — was burned at the stake: while that other and more genial but frivolous ex-monk, Rabelais, was, in spite of the license of so much of his works, received with favor at the Vatican.

XXXVI
The Renaissance Popes

But here we come to a point of far greater importance in connection with this alleged reform of history. In a special work, *The Renaissance and The Reformation* (1934), Professor Lucas expands the treatment of those themes which he gives in his *Short History of Civilization*, from which I have hitherto quoted. He does not alter the judgments which I have criticized, and he surprises us from the first by his broad conception of the two movements, which he considers "profoundly important in the history of our culture." His general conception of them is that the world, which had hitherto been spiritual and ascetic, became "secularized" by the rapid growth of wealth and luxury since the thirteenth century. In a chapter with the title of "The Decay of Chivalry," he says (p. 117): "Chivalric ideas dominated the Middle Ages. The clergy also shared these ideas." In explaining these chivalric ideas he shows that he means the cluster of virtues (honor, loyalty, justice, regard for the chastity of woman) which are gathered together in the myth of the Age of Chivalry; which, as I showed, is rejected by all expert historians on the period. This period is, in fact, described by those history-writers and literary men who still repeat the myth as from 1100 to 1400, so that it would be difficult to imagine *when* the supposed asceticism of Europe ended and the secularization began. Nor, seeing that Professor Lucas tells us that in this work he is particularly using a psychological interpretation of history, do we understand why in those ages of faith and piety, men, including the popes and prelates — the papacy itself, he says, became a "secular institution" — should lose religion because they became wealthy and powerful when in our materialistic age so many find it entirely easy to esteem religion.

But anything may be expected of a historian who believes that in either the twelfth or the thirteenth century or the Dark Age that preceded them, Christian Europe was either spiritual or ascetic. It is only because of their persistent practice of suppressing half the facts of history and entertaining all the fictions of Roman Catholic literature that our historians blunder into such extraordinary positions. This suppression of ugly facts is at this crisis in European history as grave and misleading as it was in connection with the Dark Age.

The great issue at this point is whether the mighty religious revolt of the sixteenth century was or was not primarily a protest against the corruption of the papacy and the Roman church. And this is not merely a question of interpreting a long past event. If you grant that it was, you must flatly deny the pretensions which the church of Rome puts before us today. The evasion of some Roman Catholic apologists, that some corruption does not affect their claims because, while they believe that the popes are infallible, they never said that they were impeccable, is absurd. There might be some plausibility in this if it were a question of a brief spell of corruption, at long intervals, in a chronicle of virtuous and high-minded popes, but we shall see that it is just the opposite. From 1300 to the second half of the seventeenth century the record of the papacy and the papal court was one of corruption punctured by a few short intervals of genuinely religious character and attempts at reform, and this corruption was reflected in the church generally. The Roman Catholic often tries to lessen the impact of the few ugly facts that he is compelled to admit by pretending that by corruption we mean only sexual conduct that is condemned by the church. On the contrary, we mean a dozen vices besides and more important than this; neglect of their professed papal duties, sale of "sacred" offices, squandering of the wealth of the church on worthless relatives, refusal to censure corruption, idle and luxurious living, encouraging corruption in their court and intrigue at elections, and so on. The papacy habitually stank with these vices (which began in the fourth century) from the end of the thirteenth to the later part of the seventeenth century, while the general corruption of the clergy and monks was almost disregarded. The world concluded that these men were no Vicars of Christ, that the doctrine of a special divine guidance was a blasphemous myth. The idea that god carefully preserved popes from uttering incorrect theological formulas yet allowed this corruption century after century is grotesque.

Therefore, in recent times — there was much more candor about the popes in Roman Catholic history before the nineteenth century — Roman Catholic historians have suppressed or mendaciously misrepresented facts on an heroic scale. I know only two, Lord Acton and Dr. L. Pastor, who have been generally candid. And the new history coincides to an amazing extent with the new Roman Catholic history, as we have seen throughout. We are not, as some of them say, introducing religious controversy into history. It is introduced by those who support the Roman Catholic interpretation of history by suppressing the masses of facts that contradict it. If a modern historian who feels that the chief value of his science is that it enables us to recognize the true

civilizing influences and reject the spurious so manipulates the facts that he distorts the reader's estimate of those influences, he would do better to explain that in the present circumstances it is impossible to get the full truth published in America.

Those vices of the thirteenth century which I described — vices, remember, admitted by every non-Roman Catholic expert on the period — are quite generally admitted to have become worse in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Regarding, particularly, the vice upon which the church now pours its hottest invectives, Dr. L. Pastor, the best Roman Catholic historian, says in the introduction to the fifth volume of his work (pp. 114-117):

> Of the evils which darken Italian life at this period the deadliest was the prevailing immorality . . . it increased to a terrible extent during the age of the Renaissance. . . . Especially among the cultivated classes revolting excesses were common. With a few honorable exceptions almost all the Italian princes of the period of the Renaissance were steeped in vice. Aeneas Sylvius (Pius II, himself very loose as a young man) said, "Most of the rulers of Italy were born out of wedlock." Cruelty and vindictiveness went hand in hand with immorality. The histories of the Malaresta of Rimini, the Manfredi of Ferrara, and the Baglioni of Perugia, are an appalling tissue of malignity, profligacy, and savage brutality. All the glamour round the court of the Sforza at Milan and the D'Este of Ferrara is insufficient to conceal the fearful immorality which pervaded the brilliant society and the horrors that were enacted within it. The court of Naples was, if anything, even worse. Ferranti (the king) combined considerable intellectual culture with the cunning and the cruelty of a beast of prey.

In my recent work *Judged* I have translated many passages from contemporary Italian witnesses to this corruption, and it is described at length in my *History of Morals*. What I said of the thirteenth century, that it was one of the most immoral in history — taking the word in its broader as well as in its narrower sense — may justly be applied to the three centuries that followed. And of this general formidable corruption of character of clergy and laity the new historians, for the most part, give their readers no suspicion and in no case make more than a few slight references to character.

Worst of all in its effect on the mind of Europe and its revolt against Rome was the corruption of the papacy, yet beyond the fact that

Alexander VI was immoral, which is too notorious to ignore, this corruption is entirely suppressed. We saw how our historians endorsed the Roman Catholic version in regard to Boniface VIII, the Avignon popes, and those of the Great Schism, a period of twelve years of papal corruption with very little relief. They then describe how the prelates of the church put an end to the schism and appointed Martin V to reform the church, and they give their readers the impression that this was done. Even Pastor admits that it was not. Martin spent thirty years in idle luxury and the patronage of men and letters, often grossly immoral men. Nicholas V then spent eight years in the patronage of arts and letters. "The reforming zeal of his early days had cooled down," says Pastor. With the next Pope Calixtus II, the first Borgia pope, the papal court quickly came to share the corruption of the age owing to his criminal promotion by his infamous nephews and other men of the same type. Under the next two popes, Pius II (the more or less converted Humanist), Paul II ("wholly given over to sensual pleasure," says Gregorovius), Sixtus IV, who promoted a fresh and even viler brood of nephews), and Innocent VIII (who promoted his own children as well as vicious nephews), the proportion of corrupt cardinals in the "sacred college" grew until they could control the papal election, which became a sordid gamble for the rich prize, with murderous fights — 200 murders were committed in the election that followed the death of Innocent — between the private troops of the cardinals.

So the notorious Borgia, bribing on an unprecedented scale, came to the throne of Alexander VI. To the conscientious social historian the significance of his pontificate is not merely that he flagrantly ignored the Christian code, but that his election lights up the whole general corruption. His mistress and five children (one of whom he made a cardinal) were known to the whole city, yet its rejoicing at his election was more boisterous than ever. As his old mistress was no longer young, he took a golden-haired girl as his new mistress. She lived with his daughter Lucrezia, and they were the chief ladies at functions in the Vatican. Head of the large staff of the Vatican, or master of ceremonies, was a German prelate, Burchard, and he kept a diary which we still have, though it has never been translated. For the Eve of All Saints' Day, 1500, when Alexander was seventy years old, he makes this unchallengeable entry in his diary:

> That night fifty of the more decent [more wealthy — some of them made up to $50,000 a year] prostitutes, who are called courtesans, dined with the duke of Valentino [the pope's son, who

had had his sister's husband murdered a few months earlier] in the apostolic palace, and after dinner they danced with the attendants, first in their clothes and then nude. Lighted candles were then placed on the ground and chestnuts between the candles, and the naked women, crawling between the candles on their hands and knees, had to pick up the chestnuts, the pope and Lucrezia looking on. At the end gifts of silk dresses, pairs of drawers, hats, etc. were given to those who had intercourse with the prostitutes the largest number of times. This was done openly in the hall, and the gifts handed to the winners.

I believe I am the only writer who has ever ventured to translate this, yet such things throw much more light on the Reformation than all the learned disquisitions on social and political changes. The orgy must have been known to all Italy with a week or two — in fact the "Chestnut Dance" at once became popular with the nobles throughout Italy — and all over Europe in a month or two, for the dispatches of the foreign ambassadors repeat all the gossip of Rome at that time.

When Alexander died none of the vicious cardinals could get the necessary majority of votes in the struggle, and they put in an old and mortally ill man. He died in ten days, and the "great" Julius II became pope. He had three bastard daughters and was publicly charged with unnatural vice. As pope he was just a "warrior in a cassock," as the contemporary historian Guicciardini says. He drank and swore heavily and his rages were notorious. There was not a trace of Christian piety in him, and he spent half his time in the army.

The revolt was already simmering in Germany, yet at the death of Julius the cardinals elected the worthless Leo X — an election which, even the *Catholic Encyclopedia* says, pleased only those "who looked upon the papal court as a center of amusement." In the early days of his pontificate, says the contemporary Guicciardini, "many believed that he was quite chaste, but it was discovered that he was excessively devoted to pleasures that cannot even be mentioned with decency." Leo's chief friend and biographer explains that this means sodomy with the young nobles of the court. Largely on jewels and sordid banquets he spent about $100,000,000 (got mainly from the sale of indulgences and sacred offices) in eight years. Some of the cardinals conspired to poison him, and, to get evidence, he had the flesh of their servants stripped off with red-hot pincers.

The usual deadlock at his death let in a religious pope, but the scornful Romans broke his heart in a year. He could not even speak

Italian. Luther was now in open revolt, yet the dogfight at the next election, to which some of the cardinals came in their military-plumed hats and silver spurs, lasted three weeks and ended in the choice of a noble bastard of the great Medici family, whose dishonorable conduct brought upon Rome, and from the army of the very Roman Catholic Emperor, a sack that surpassed in horror those of the Goths and the Vandals. For eight days and nights the soldiers, mostly Roman Catholic Spaniards and Italians, looted, raped, and murdered. They reduced the population of the city from 99,000 to 32,000, raping the nuns, burning churches and monasteries, drinking with the whores in St. Peter's and gambling on the great altar, murdering hundreds in the cathedral and stealing its treasures, hanging men by their testicles, and burning their feet to make them reveal their treasures.

One would think that this would be even more efficacious than the revolt in Germany to force a Roman Catholic Reformation, but the cardinals at the next election appointed Paul III, who had gained promotion in the church only because he was the brother of Alexander VI's last mistress. He was the father of four known children, whom he entertained at banquets and indecent comedies in the Vatican. England was lost by this time and Calvin was making rapid progress in France and Germany. But Paul fought the demand for a reform-council, as we shall see, and when he died the cardinals, after a fifty-five-day fierce fight, elected an even grosser man than Leo X. This Julius III, who "wore himself out by the intemperance of his life" (says De Thon, the contemporary French jurist), not only had the coarsest and most frivolous habits, but made a cardinal of a guttersnipe of the age of sixteen — "a filthy, arrogant beast," says one of the leading physicians of Rome — and so scandalously petted him that it was generally believed that their relations were sodomitic.

During twenty years of this sordid corruption of the papal court (1535-55) the popes had resisted the demand of the Roman Catholic world for a reform-council. How it was now met and how it completely failed to reform morals I will tell in the next section. But before the death of Julius III the Reformation had spread to half of Europe. What are we to think of historians who deny that this corruption of the papacy and the church was the chief cause of the Reformation and hardly say a word about the appalling record that I have just summarized? They must have a low estimate of the Roman Catholic mind of the time, one would say. But most of the new historians do not say a word about this corruption and so do not mention it as even one of the causes of the revolt. Professor Langer describes the whole series of these popes and

mentions corruption only in the notorious case of Alexander VI. Professor Thorndike also speaks as if Alexander were the only sinner. Professor Boak and his collaborators politely deprecate "the worldly lives and purely political interests of some of the later popes such as Alexander VI" (p. 267). Professor Perkins ignores the whole sordid development. Professor Lucas says (275) that "most of the popes after Leo X were devout and sincere." I have described Leo's three successors and will resume the series later. None of our historians give the facts. The record of the papacy at least from 1455 — you might almost say from 1294 — to 1655 has no parallel in the records of any other religious organization in history, and they decline to tell it. Then, we shall see, they support the Roman Catholic claim that corruption of the papacy and the church was not the chief cause of the Protestant revolt; some of them do not mention it even as a secondary cause. They leave the impression on the reader that this is a fiction of the "old" history.

XXXVII
The Reformation

I have had to be content with a short summary of the events that shook Christendom during the century before and even in the course of the Reformation. Most of my readers will know that they have a fairly full account, with the authorities, in my *The History of The Roman Church* and my *History of Morals;* and in my more recent work *Judged* they will find (translated) passages from contemporary Roman Catholic writers in most sections of the Christian world showing with what horror the really religious prelates and university-doctors regarded the proceedings at Rome. Our historians invoke the rapid growth of the middle class as one of the causes of the Reformation but do not explain why this large body of educated middle-class men — teachers, writers, doctors, lawyers, merchants, councillors, etc. — who mainly carried the reform, were moved to examine the foundations of the papal claims and reject them. It is certainly not the asceticism of the medieval church that moved them to rebel, for asceticism was the last thing it required of them. Even of the men and women of good character the church required no more "asceticism" than it does of decent Roman Catholics today; and to suggest that these men of the later Middle Ages quit the Roman Catholic church because it required, as it still does, occasional fast days would be ludicrous. It would be just as ridiculous to say that they rebelled against the theoretical laws of the church in regard to sex, because the Protestant churches demanded exactly the same restrictions.

The Reformation was at first little more than a denial that the pope was the supreme head of the entire Christian church. The bases of his claim were seriously examined and found to be spurious; and then, when the critical spirit was once aroused, it was gradually realized that this usurping priesthood had fabricated other dogmas — indulgences, purgatory, confession, and other "sacraments," clerical celibacy, etc. — for the purpose of strengthening its power over the laity. The Bible was now widely circulated in printed editions and in the vernacular languages, and this was taken as the acid test of Roman doctrines. Here was the substance of the Reformation, and the social and political changes which our historians invoke to account for it are largely irrelevant.

What one might seriously ask is why Europe did not start this investigation of the foundations of the Roman system before the sixteenth century. As many of our historians point out, the revolt *did* begin much earlier. Historians who, because one bishop in many hundreds read Cicero or the erotic Ovid, because one abbey in hundreds had a few hundred manuscripts, insist that there never was a Dark Age, cannot give us a realistic account of the development. In the Dark Age the rare scholar who drifted into heresy and said so had no lay background. There was virtually no middle class. As soon as wealth began to increase, with the inevitable consequence of an educated middle class, skepticism and fiery criticism of Rome began. I pointed out in an earlier section that even clergy (presumably with a number of followers) were burned in batches before the year 1100. The school life spread rapidly in the regions nearest to Spain and to the Lombard cities, and the revolt spread to hundreds of thousands. But to meet mass revolt the church invented two new weapons — the Crusade (or wholehearted massacre and spoliation by armies of brutal soldiers) and the Inquisition (with rewards for denouncing heretics), and for a time the revolt was checked. It expanded again (Lollards, Hussites, etc.) with the growth of culture and city life, and violence had again to be used. But the popes of the fifteenth century had not sufficient religion themselves to maintain the old vigilance, and the growing corruption of their court finally convinced the large middle-class and numbers of the sincere clergy that their pretensions to special divine support were fraudulent. The revolt was inevitable. Only by use of flimsy sophistry could it be pretended that a papacy that had been greedy, corrupt or in other ways false to its principles during — with short intervals of sobriety — 200 years was the spiritually-guided and equipped agency which it declared itself to be.

Had it not been for the long spell of corruption — a revolting corruption in view of the claimed titles of "Holy Father," "Holy See," "Sacred College," etc. — one may doubt if the revolt even of the sixteenth century would have succeeded. At all events, the causes given in the new history, which has thought fit to suppress the corruption entirely or almost entirely, are totally inadequate. Their broad contention is that the Reformation was caused by social and political changes in Europe. Professor Lucas, pehaps, makes the most serious attempt to establish the new theory of the Protestant revolt, as he prefers to call it, because the "reform" or "reformation" of the church (which, by the way, in their pages shows so little need of reform) was conducted by the church itself, as the Roman Catholics claim. He gives us (pp. 419-22) six causes. The first is: "The rise of political absolutism produced a secular state of

mind." By absolutism historians mean that by the sixteenth century the kings had destroyed the feudal power of the nobles and thus became unrestricted in their own power. It is true that, partly because the invention of gunpowder and cannon had made the provincial castles indefensible and partly because the nobles, now in silks and satins, found the luxurious life of the court and the city mansion more attractive, the kings were now more powerful than ever. But one does not see that this increase of material power and wealth explains the readiness of many of them to reject the spiritual authority of the pope. Were not the kings of France, Spain, Portugal, Naples, Austria, and Bavaria as absolutist as the kings of England, Prussia, and Scandinavia?

The second cause is said to be that "the medieval church organization clashed with the absolutist state." That is only another aspect of the political argument and has the same weakness. The third is: "Many popular religious practices and ecclesiastical habits urgently needed reform." Notice how the practices most assailed by the reformers — chiefly the sale of indulgences and confession — are ascribed to the people, whereas it was Rome that invented and imposed them; and that "ecclesiastical habits" is a very polite and unsatisfactory reference to the papal and clerical corruption. The fourth is that "the Renaissance contributed its share to the Reformation." How? Only because when the eyes of educated Europe were opened, the false pretensions of the popes were easily detected.

Professor Langer suggests that with the new rise of nationalism (which is greatly exaggerated) the Romans were hated as foreigners (of which we have plenty of evidence centuries before). Was such a feeling likely to sweep away a profound religious conviction? And we may ask the same when he suggests that revolt would give the northern princes a chance to confiscate the vast wealth of the clergy and monks. A monarch would have to cease to be a Roman Catholic before he could dream of such confiscation. And Professor Langer is equally unimpressive when he gives as one motive that the new capitalism resented the restraints which the pope put upon trade. What restraints? For two centuries the developing capitalism had taken no notice of the old ban on interest, and the popes did not enforce it. The Italian bankers were the closest friends of the Renaissance popes, and the new capitalism did not feel itself in the least restrained in France, Spain, and Portugal after the Reformation any more than the Roman Catholic capitalists are today.

Professor Thorndike gives as the primary cause the rise of nationalities and distrust of foreigners; as to which the Reformation did not make

an atom of difference. He next stresses the confiscable wealth of the church, which, relatively to the time, had been as great in the thirteenth century. The Lollards and the Hussites had railed at the wealth of the church, as Arnold of Brescia had done before, but they had merely wanted Christian principles applied to it. He next suggests the failure of the popes to secure social justice, which the reformers so little sought that Luther urged the nobles to cut down the peasants who demanded it, and the growth of skepticism. It is a truism that the Reformation meant a growth of skepticism as regards a few dogmas (papal supremacy, indulgences, and sacraments), but in any deeper sense it was as hateful to the Protestants as to the Roman Catholics.

Professor Barnes protests that the Reformation was "in no sense purely a religious movement"; it was the joint result of a number of causes. But the nonreligious causes which he assigns do not take us any further. He gives first the growth of wealth; but one does not see how this disturbed men's acceptance of the religious doctrine of the papacy, except insofar as it meant a wide spread of education and critical culture. He next, like the others, thinks that the growth of nationalities clashed with the internationalism of the church, and I have dealt with that suggestion. Thirdly, he believes that a growth of mysticism in the Christian body resented the gross materialism of the hierarchy, which seems to be a strained suggestion. How far Luther could be called a mystic — his *Table Talk* is a quaint diary of a mystic — we need not ask, but certainly few of the undoubted mystics of the time quit the church. It is as idle to suggest that the materialism of the age resented the mysticism or spirituality of the church. The Reformation fought the materialism of the church. Nor is Dr. Barnes more impressive when he invokes the heavy taxation levied by Rome. The princes of Europe had complained of this for centuries, but they did not, and could not, make it a ground to deny that the pope was the Vicar of Christ until the reformers seriously examined this claim and declared that *on religious grounds* it was to be rejected.

Professors Sellers and Krey, though not dealing at any great length with the Reformation, seem to be the only representatives of the new history who give a fairly satisfactory account of it. They say (p. 406) that "the most important cause was the worldliness which still cursed the church." From the little material which I have been able to give in this small work, the reader will understand that "worldliness" is far too feeble an expression. Even those popes who, at least as popes (most of them were, of course, well advanced in age at their election), had no sexual entanglements allowed the body of cardinals and the greater part

of the Roman clergy, monks, and nuns to become corrupt to an extraordinary extent, and the license of conduct spread to the clergy generally.

Moreover, nearly all the Renaissance popes had a more serious corruption than love affairs. There were few of them who were not scandalous nepotists who sold sacred offices and privileges (indulgences), permitted a sordid corruption to continue in the Roman law-courts, and drew an immense papal revenue from tainted sources such as the tax on the numerous prostitutes in the "holy" city.

It was the culmination of this corruption under Popes Alexander VI and Leo X that provoked a widespread investigation of the papal claims and led half of Europe to reject them. That is the essence of the Reformation. Revolt had spread ever since the eleventh century, and the conciliar movement of the fourteenth century — a movement, remember, that denied the supremacy of the popes and held that a general council of the church could judge and depose him — had been espoused by the best part of the higher clergy and scholars. They had hoped that this would be recognized as sound Roman Catholic doctrine. When the popes not only made it clear that they would not agree but entered upon a period of open depravity, religious revolt against this corrupt institution, supported now by the large middle class with a critical culture and equipped with the printing press, was clearly inevitable. As Professors Sheppard and Godfrey well say (p. 20):

> It has become fairly general with the present generation of historians to state that the Protestant Reformation was not exclusively a religious movement. Such a statement, instead of clarifying the issue, seems but to becloud it.

The secular forces or situations which the new historians invoke to explain it are either irrelevant or help us only to understand why the revolt of the sixteenth century succeeded when all its predecessors had failed; and curiously enough, they fail to point out the importance of one fact that counted considerably. The Roman (German) emperor was now a Spaniard and was absent from Germany for many years. This made it easier for the German princes to listen to Luther and defy their foreign emperor and his foreign pope. But the revolt itself was religious, and it derived its driving force, as the German and English reformers themselves make clear, from the scandal of the papal corruption. It is not education to attempt to explain it and not give the student the faintest idea of the depth and extent of that corruption. The new theory

greatly pleases the church by ignoring and virtually denying that corruption. It was monstrous.

XXXVIII
The Counter-Reformation

Our historians are equally misleading when they deal with what is called the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation. The chief modern Roman Catholic historian, Dr. Pastor, accepts this name, which a few historians had previously used, for the theory that the church reformed itself without any, or at least with little, impulse from the Protestant revolt. But the phrase "Counter-Reformation" clearly implies not only that there was a good deal to reform, but that the Reformation was in fact inspired by the schism in Germany and England. Our modern, especially American, Roman Catholics violently repudiate this, and again the new history coincides admirably with the wishes of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Counter-Reformation is, we are told by some of our historians, an old and discredited phrase. There was a Protestant revolt and a Roman Catholic Reformation; or, to conciliate the Protestants who, after all, are fairly numerous in America though they have shown a singular apathy as regards this prostitution of history, a Protestant Reformation and a Roman Catholic Reformation. Some of them go so far as to suggest that, since the old church reformed itself, there was really no ground for a Protestant revolt. That is ridiculous. Whatever the old church did, it certainly did not alter the doctrines of papal supremacy, purgatory, sacraments, etc., and it was the essential aim of the Protestants to reject these doctrines as unscriptural.

Here there are two chief points to be considered; exactly what reforms did Rome effect and to what extent was this due to Protestant pressure. On both points the new history falsifies the truth. Naturally the historian who has suppressed the truth about the gravest corruption of the medieval church finds it easy to persuade his reader that the church itself corrected such abuses as had "crept into it" in so wicked an age. But Roman Catholics do not like this idea of abuses and we find our historians painfully vague about the particular reforms which the church is supposed to have carried out. The second point is, however, less important,and we will briefly discuss it first.

Professor Lucas says that "the reforms of Roman Catholicism sprang from native Roman Catholic strength and to a minor extent only from a reaction initiated by the Protestant revolt" (p. 419). This, he says, is the

result of modern historical scholarship. It is certainly the opinion of Roman Catholic scholars. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* comically suggests that the reformers got their ideas from the Roman Catholics! One historian says that the Roman Catholic Reformation had already proceeded far in Spain, and it was just extended to Italy and the rest of Roman Catholic Europe. This Reformation in Spain, where the sale of indulgences went on — until the nineteenth century, as a matter of fact — as merrily as ever, seems to have consisted in the burning of a million heretics, which the modern world does not exactly consider a moral improvement on the ideal religious toleration which Spain had enjoyed under the Arabs. However, most of our historians are content to say that the Roman Catholic Reformation was just an acceleration of the reform which had been proceeding for some time in the church, and that this acceleration was doubtless due in small part to the northern revolt and its loud indictment of the Roman church.

It is much like saying that the French Revolution was only an acceleration of a movement which was already in progress. What had preceded the Revolution was not a reform but an unheeded demand for reform on the part of a certain number of individuals. So it was with the Counter-Reformation. No one has ever questioned that a minority of the cardinals and prelates had for decades demanded reform. The conciliar movement itself was a reform movement, and when the Lutheran revolt began the German bishops, whether personally virtuous or not, anxiously pressed for reform. But we have not yet a historian bold enough to claim that there was any reform before the death of Leo X in 1521, yet Luther's defiance of the pope had resounded throughout Germany before this. At Leo's death a would-be reformer, a Dutchman, was elected; and not one of our historians explains that the loose cardinals were still in the majority but in their fierce rivalry none could get the necessary number of votes, and they put in this aged and powerless foreigner who was killed in a few months by the ridicule of the Romans. His successor was a noble bastard of the voluptuous Medici family; and if you turn back to the section on the popes of the Renaissance you will realize that the only reform effected in his days (to 1534) was that the scourge of an appalling sack by Roman Catholic armies fell upon Rome.

If we admit that some reforms were carried out under the next pope, Paul III, we are at a time when the Reformation was in full blast; twenty years after the revolt of Luther and several years after the secession of England. This would suffice for my purpose, but I have already shown that the election of Paul III, brother of Alexander's mistress, and himself

a corrupt man, is decisive. He had the usual indecent comedies played before audiences of ladies in the Vatican, made cardinals of two of his boy-nephews (aged fourteen and seventeen), married his thirteen-year-old grandson to a loose bastard daughter of the emperor, gave the emperor the right (worth millions a year) to sell indulgences in Spain, and all his life evaded the emperor's demand for a reform council. The Roman Catholic Reformation did not begin before 1565; and by that time Rome had lost its income from the northern countries as well as England and most of Germany, and Calvinism was making serious progress in France. Yet the great majority of our historians insist that Protestant pressure had little or nothing to do with the Roman Catholic Reformation.

It is more serious that they give their readers an entirely false view of the nature and extent of the Roman Catholic reform. Professor Lucas has forty pages on this Roman Catholic reform. He broadly characterizes it by pointing out that in 1540 the Vatican had lost or seemed about to lose the greater part of Europe, but by 1580 there was a marvelous recovery. This was due, he says, to a number of factors: the traditional piety of the lower classes, the zeal of the Spanish rulers, the ardor for reform of the religious and cultivated prelates, the rise of new religious orders, the reforming efforts of the popes, and the Council of Trent. Other historians speak of this revival as "rolling back" the attacking forces from the north. All of which amounts to the well-known fact that by instigating religious wars in France and Germany and spurring the Inquisition in Italy, Spain, and Portugal, the Vatican had begun the hard division of Europe into Roman Catholic and Protestant spheres. We want to know what reform there was, and Professor Lucas hardly helps us. Of Paul III, "the petticoat cardinal" (as Rome called him) he says: "He began a renovation of the papacy which was so successful that he may be regarded as one of the greatest of the popes." (643) See above for the real character of Paul! Of the repulsive Julius IV, who was elected after Paul's "renovation" of the papacy, he says that "his morals were beyond reproach in spite of the insinuations which never were substantiated." You may remember that Julius made a cardinal of a contemptible slum-youth and so clung to him that Rome wondered if the boy was his son or his sodomitic friend. Even the Roman Catholic Dr. Pastor who tells this merely denies the second theory and leaves the first open (vol. 13, p. 156). Pastor sums up Julius by saying that while his church was "bleeding from a thousand wounds" (after all that Paul III had done) Pope Julius "gave himself up" to loose comedies, frivolities, and card-playing. Beyond reproach!

After Julius a shadow-pope appeared for a few months, and the cardinals then elected a man, Paul IV, with whose accession in 1555 most of our historians say that the Roman Catholic Reformation really began. He had been one of the reforming cardinals, though a rather quaint type of puritan. He was notoriously fond of strong wine. His dinners sometimes ran to twenty-five dishes, and he surrounded himself by and enriched as sordid a group of relatives as any pope ever had. His favorite nephew, whom he made a cardinal, was of the more vicious type. Pastor rather wildly suggests that these nephews concealed their vices from him; which Ranke shows to be false. But Pastor admits that he, as we should expect, carried out only a few reforms in Rome, and that he had to be buried secretly or the Romans would have taken revenge on his corpse.

How little reform he made is plain from the fact that at his death the cardinals elected a man whose character was so notorious that Pastor says, "the evil elements immediately awakened once more into activity." When this man, Pius IV, died, such was still the state of the "sacred college" that one of the worst of the old group, Cardinal Ippolite d'Este — a man who in earlier years had had his brother's eyes cut out for ogling his (the cardinal's) mistress — won six votes by bribery. This was fifty years after the revolt by Luther. But Rome got at last a reforming pope, Pius V. As I have shown elsewhere, the state of morals in Rome, even in the monasteries and nunneries, was extraordinary, some of the choicer of the prostitutes again making $100,000 a year. The chief reform of Pius V, who lasted six years, was to fall truculently on these women and on heretics. Hundreds of heretics were burned in Rome — modern Roman Catholics say that the Roman Inquisition took no lives — and blasphemers had their tongues pierced with a red hot iron.

His real reforms were largely undone by his successor, Gregory XIII. The gay ladies returned, and one of them is reported to have made $750,000 under Gregory and to have been the idol of the city. His reign was a compromise for thirteen years. He was a heavy nepotist and was the pope who blessed the St. Bartholomew massacre in France. Then came the second reforming pope Sixtus V. There is good reason to think that the cardinals were mistaken (or duped) about his character, but during his five years of office he fell with appalling severity upon the loose women and all criminals. The Roman Catholic Baron Hubner has written a large biography of this pope, and he is candid about the man's own vices. He had a vile temper and was a shocking nepotist. He sold offices more flagrantly than any pope since Leo X (Hubner says) and mutilated his prisoners. Rome was lit up with joy at his death, and only

one of his successors in the next hundred years attempted serious reform. By 1650, says the Roman Catholic historian Hayward, "the prestige of the Holy See had fallen so low that nobody took any notice of the pope." Such had been the great Roman Catholic reform which the new history has discovered.

The famous *Popes of Rome* of L. von Ranke, closed with the pontificate of Clement XI (1670-76). From contemporary documents Ranke gives us a revolting picture of the papacy and Rome at this time — after a century and a quarter of Roman Catholic Reformation! He chiefly uses — he does not translate, but I have seen the letter in Arckenholtz' *Memoirs* (Appendix No. 32) — a letter describing to the pope the appalling evils of Rome about the year 1663 and (futilely) imploring him to remedy them. The people's afflictions, he says, "are worse than the afflictions of the Assyrians and Egyptians"; they are "treated with greater barbarity than the slaves of Syria or Africa." The administration of the law by the papal officials was, says Ranke, "utterly perverted and corrupt," while pope after pope enriched his relatives. One squandered upon his family the vast sum, estimated at hundreds of millions of dollars, which the popes had stored to finance a war against the Protestants.

All these facts are given in Pastor and L. von Ranke, yet no reader of the new history gets even the dimmest idea of them. A few of these historians, like Professor Langer, just note in a conventional way that there was a Roman Catholic Reformation. Most of them convey the impression that the papacy, Rome, and the church were purified of evil about the middle of the sixteenth century. Not one points out that there were only two reforming popes in 300 years of papal history; that jointy they held power for ten years; that most of their work was undone at once by their successors.

XXXIX
The Council of Trent

But what about the Council of Trent, which they all describe as carrying out the reforms which the popes projected? The pope, says Professor Perkins, "called a new council" and directed it to reform the church. It "effected a general and permanent reform of the church," says Professor Langer. Professor Thorndike says: "The Council of Trent reformed the abuses of the papal court . . . and forced the local clergy to attend more faithfully to their religious duties." A few, like Professor Barnes, ignore the famous Council, but the general teaching of the new history is that the popes convoked it, when the time was ripe, for stamping out such abuses as had arisen in the church. That the papacy was still, a hundred years after Trent, in the corrupt condition I have described they do not seem to have the least suspicion.

The truth is that the popes had received petitions for reform from a few zealous cardinals or prelates long before the time of Luther and had ignored them. When the struggle of Protestant and Roman Catholic brought conditions of chaos to Germany the emperor pressed Rome vigorously to call a general council to discuss and reform the condition of the church, which was the strongest argument of the reformers. The German leaders of the Reformation, who were regarded as still not definitely lost to the church, were to meet the Italian and papal representatives and plan to reform the church "in head and members." Paul III, the pope who in the new history calls for a council, fought against the German call all his life. He began in 1536 to see that something must be done, but he made the impossible suggestion of a council in Italy. Remembering the fate of Huss and other reformers who had trusted a safe-conduct to venture out, he consented to a Council of Trent, just north of the Italian frontier. But he laid down such conditions — he was quite determined that the corruption should not be discussed — that when it was announced in 1541, no foreigner, and only a dozen Italians, put in an appearance, and Rome gladly abandoned the project. But the advance of the Turks added to the anxieties of the Vatican and, in 1545, a Council of Trent was again convoked. But Paul's real intention — he wanted only to suppress heresy — and his scandalous conduct were too well known. Only a few dozen arrived, and the plan was again abandoned.

Under Paul's vile successor, Julius III, the council had no better prospect. It was again convoked and again suspended; and its real work did not begin until 1562. Although, naturally, no representatives of the Protestants would attend or were wanted, the French and Spanish delegates pressed acridly for a cleaning of the Roman stables, and the papal representatives retorted — incidentally jeering at the Spaniards for introducing a new disease, syphilis, into Europe and the French, whose king contracted it, for spreading it — that this was the pope's business.

The classic work on the council is that of a Venetian member of one of the new religious bodies, Fra Paolo Sarpi. Roman Catholics scurrilously misrepresent him for his caustic work, but he was a deeply religious man and one of the most respected citizens of the Venetian republic. However, I may be brief. Trent was not a reform-council. The pope saw to that. Reform was *his* business, he insisted. Nine-tenths of the time was occupied with dogma. The council, in the papal view, was merely to give a more precise definition of the Roman Catholic doctrine for the guidance of the Inquisitors. Under heavy pressure from the German, French, and Spanish bishops a sitting was occasionally devoted to reform, but the only important reforms that the council *ordered* were the suppression of the sale of indulgences and the duel and a ruling to the bishops to see to the better education and improvement of the character of the clergy and monks. Not one of these reforms was carried out and, as I have shown, there was no reform in Rome itself except during a few years. The description of it which I quoted from a contemporary cardinal in the last section shows its condition about 1660. The *Memoirs* of Bishop Ricci, a profoundly religious prelate, tell us the incredible condition of the priests, monks, nuns, and their Roman authorities a century later, and assure us that this corruption went back more than a century. And still, in 1850, the pope's kingdom was so foul that the chief secular powers of Europe had publicly to admonish him to reform it.

XL
The Jesuits

The reader of the new history who finds so much talk in it about the Roman Catholic Reformation naturally understands that this refers to a moral reform. He may reflect that the writers have admitted so little corruption in the church to that time that he may wonder what *was* reformed, and he will find that while most of the historians discuss the Roman Catholic reform at length they are singularly evasive about the details. When they say that the popes convoked a Council of Trent, strengthened the Inquisition, established the Index of Prohibited Books, we are not much wiser. Burning more heretics is scarcely a moral improvement to the modern mind. We want specific evidence that the sordid moral corruption of Rome and Roman Catholic countries, of priests, monks, and laity, was changed. We do not expect our historians to quote contemporary authorities on the point, for it is one of the baffling features of the new history that it scarcely ever quotes such works. In short, I find in them only one definite detail that might be brought under the head of moral reform. It is that the sixteenth century in Italy saw the birth of several new religious orders, especially the Jesuits.

In calling these new associations "religious orders" our historians conceal from the reader a fact that ought not to be concealed. The existing religious orders — Benedictines, Franciscans, etc. — were so notorious for their corruption that at Trent there was a demand for the suppression of them, and Rome, though reluctant to make the awful confession which this would imply, was at least determined not to permit the founding of a new "order." So the new associations of clerics under vows called themselves the Theatines, the Servants of Mary, and the Society of Jesus. The first and second of these bodies remained small and obscure, but we follow the lead of our historians in paying a little special attention to the Jesuits.

It will naturally occur to the reader that none of these things bear witness to the general religious and moral revival, but rather suggest the opposite. In the acute religious ferment of the century some hundreds — thousands if you like — of the Italians in addition to the normal, decent minority took their religion seriously. They found "the world"

too corrupt to remain in and the old monastic orders too corrupt to enter, so new associations were formed for them. The world, we saw, went merrily on its wicked way when they had quit it. That is the obvious meaning of the new foundations for men and women. But the Society of Jesus had in it from the start the germs of hypocrisy and corruption and occupies a unique and discreditable place in Roman Catholic history.

Ignatius of Loyola (whom Professor Perkins calls "the greatest man of his time"), the founder, a converted Spanish soldier, gathered a few kindred spirits and had a melodramatic plan of leading them to convert the Turks. A visit to the East modified his ideas, and he turned his knightly ardor upon the heretics. The Vatican, as I said, was unfavorable to any new foundation or anything resembling monastic bodies, and at Rome Ignatius and his small band of followers devoted themselves to the service of the sick poor. One or two historians make the mistake of thinking that this was the original aim of the society. Professor Lucas says: "The Jesuits addressed their efforts to the humble and destitute, the great mass of common folk who composed the bulk of the church." The service of the sick was a cloak for their real designs, a trick for disarming the Roman authorities. It was one of the peculiar features of the founding of the Society that for some years each recruit was bound to strict silence about their aim, and most of them and of their admirers were not admitted to his confidence. At Rome they assured the pope that they were going East to convert the Turks, and he blessed their enterprise. Then they scattered like knights-errant over Italy, nursing the sick poor, hanging around the universities, and cultivating the pious society of rich women. In my *Candid History of The Jesuits* (1913) I quote the words of Ignatius himself: "Let us avoid all relations with women *except those of the highest rank*." Some years later he said of their early work in Rome, where they ostentatiously moved among the sick poor: "We sought in this way to gain men of learning and of position to our side — or, to speak more correctly, to God's side." The end justified the means; and the end was clearly forming in his mind —to get power and wealth for his Society in order to make a new kind of attack on heresy. They had a poor little farmhouse near Rome and went out to beg and visit, alternately, the poor and the rich ladies. Half of Rome hated them from the start. Preachers denounced Ignatius as "a wolf in sheep's clothing." To disarm critics, he opened a poorhouse, with 400 destitute men, in Rome, and they decided to make a special profession of putting themselves at the direct service of the pope. All the time they sought the support of the rich and powerful, so the society

won papal recognition and began to be employed in diplomacy. As to the wonderful foreign missions on which some of them went — so much admired by our historians — it has been repeatedly shown how they falsified the figure of conversions in order to please their high patrons.

This is no place to deal with the picturesque history of the society, but to represent its appearance as one of the chief symptoms of a Roman Catholic Reformation is peculiar. It is not as if the Jesuits were, as a body, remarkable for piety. At the death of Ignatius himself they broke into fierce quarrels for the leadership; they were threatened with suppression by the first reforming pope, Paul IV; they were hated by a large proportion of the clergy; and it was not long before the society had the usual scandals. Naturally there are numbers of profoundly religious and self-sacrificing men in the records, but its methods were so flagrantly crooked that when he finally suppressed it in 1773, Pope Clement XIV pointed out that it had been rebuked by Popes Urban VII, Clement IX, X, XI, and XII, Alexander VII and VIII, Innocent X, XI, XII, an XIII, and Benedict XIV — twelve times in a century — and its members had been ignominiously expelled from nearly every Roman Catholic community in the world. Roman Catholics and historians who follow them say that Clement did not endorse the charges against them. On the contrary, he repeated all the chief charges and solemnly endorsed them. Our historians must have been hard up for evidence when they selected these three new poisoned weapons to recover its power — the Jesuits, the Index, and the new Inquisition — as the only concrete specimens of the reform of corruption.

XLI
The Thirty Years' War

One of the chief principles on which the new history lays stress is continuity. The older historians, it is said — though their words are never quoted — treated such phenomena as the Renaissance and the Reformation as sudden explosions or eruptions, and the new history shows that they were only accelerations of the pace of pre-existing movements. Most of them say the same about the Roman Catholic Reformation. It had been proceeding for some time and did not need the shock of the Protestant secessions (and immense loss of revenue) to inspire it. This, I have shown, is false. There had been repeated demands from a few isolated puritans that the popes should reform the church, but they did nothing until England followed Germany's example, little until half of Europe was lost, and still less in the way of permanent reform even at Trent. In this respect the only continuity was, apart from the short pontificates of Pius V and Sixtus V, that of corruption.

There was another continuity which our historians do not press upon the attention of the reader: the continued use by the popes of violence, torture, and massacre for suppressing criticism of the church and its doctrines. From the start of the Lutheran heresy, we saw, the papacy meant only to use this familiar weapon. It refused even to reform its own corrupt household as long as it hoped to crush Protestantism by violence, and the feebleness of the reform-resolutions at Trent was in part due to the fact that it looked forward to extinguishing the new heresy, as it had extinguished its predecessors, by war, by a European Albigensian massacre, leaving Spain then to deal with England. Throughout the second half of the sixteenth century the pope's representatives helped to inspire religious wars in Germany and France. The religious motive was, of course, mixed with political ambitions, but these wars were all between Protestant forces, which struggled for toleration, and Roman Catholic forces which refused it. But the Protestants were now too strong to suffer the fate of the Albigensians or the Hussites. Even in France the Huguenots, in spite of the horrible St. Bartholomew massacre in 1572, in which the Jesuits were plainly involved, defeated the royal armies in the field time after time, and the

king had to issue a decree of toleration (the Edict of Nantes) which greatly angered the Vatican. Before the end of the century the popes began to collect a vast sum of money in the vaults of the Castle of Sant' Angelo for the purpose of the European war for the extinction of Protestantism.

Here our historians cannot depart much from the old history, though some of them treat this, the most ghastly war in history until our modern scientific war began, as an episode of the seventeenth century that may be dismissed in a line. Others are frank about it. Professor Barnes says (II. 166):

> In many Roman Catholic countries the Protestants were repressed with extreme alertness and cruelty. The most striking examples were the Roman Catholic retaliations in the Thirty Years' War, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day in France in 1572, and the slaughter after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.

Professor Perkins says (454 and 466):

> The leaders of the Roman Catholic Reformation were determined to use force to kill heresy in every country where the government would back them. . . . The greatest of all the wars between Roman Catholics and Protestants was the Thirty Years' War. The Roman Catholics sought to win back all Germany to the old faith.

But even the few of our historians who are frank to this extent do not bring out the significance of the war. It was not a quarrel of Roman Catholic and Protestant populations, but a war instigated by the Jesuits and the papacy to drown Protestantism in blood. It shows not merely how cruel quarrels about religion can be, but the extraordinary low level of Roman Catholic character still little more than 300 years ago.

A high contemporary authority estimated in 1558 that Lutherans had captured nine-tenths of Germany. But they were naturally much feebler in Austria and Bavaria than in the north, and the Jesuits began to intrigue busily in the provinces. Ignatius had sworn that not one of his followers would ever accept an ecclesiastical dignity, but before he died he allowed one of them to become archbishop of Vienna. They are greatly praised by historians for founding large numbers of colleges and raising the level of education. As a matter of fact, they induced the

rulers to give them the confiscated estates of Protestants, and in the colleges that they then opened the dominant feature was the hymn of hate. They took only the sons of the rich and noble and filled their minds with poisonous lies about the Protestants. One of their most promising pupils was Prince Ferdinand, son of the Emperor, Charles V; and when, in 1556, Charles abdicated he left the throne and the title of Roman Emperor to Ferdinand, whom the Jesuits pushed along the way to war.

Historians sometimes reflect that, if he had had the cooperation of France and Italy as well as of his brother the king of Spain, Protestantism might have disappeared as the Albigensians and Hussites had done. But France was hostile to Spain and not docile to the papacy and Italy was always much more ready to send other nations on crusades than to take part in one. The Jesuits, flitting about Europe in melodramatic disguises, even as Protestant professors or swaggering soldiers, had to be content to plot and intrigue. At length they induced Maximilian of Bavaria to break faith with the Protestants, and the war began in Bohemia.

The chief Roman Catholic commanders had been trained in the Jesuit colleges, and Jesuits joined them in the camps. But Sweden cooperated with the Protestants, while, to the anger of Rome, Cardinal Richelieu, who suffered no dictation of popes or Jesuits, would not allow France to aid the Roman Catholics. The war dragged on for thirty years (1618-48), and it is a complaint, even of Roman Catholic historians, that the Roman Catholics might still have won and extinguished Protestantism if, in a critical stage, Pope Urban VIII (who shines brightly in the new history) had not refused to let the Roman Catholic armies have any of the vast sum stored for the purpose in the Castle of Sant' Angelo, and had allowed his worthless relatives, whose income rose from $50,000 to $1,000,000 a year under him, to empty the vaults.

Professors Sheppard and Godfrey say that this was "one of the most sordid, unheroic, and devastating wars the modern or ancient world ever knew," but they say nothing about the guilt of the papacy. The *Cambridge History* (IV, 417) reflects that it furnishes "the most appalling demonstration of the consequences of war to be found in history"; and even the *Encyclopedia Americana*, which is tender as regards Roman Catholics, says that "few wars have been more calamitous in their general effect on the mass of the people and the happiness and progress of mankind."

One would have thought that this social aspect would ensure for it a serious attention in modern history. No one disputes that it put back the cause of civilization in central Europe for one hundred years.

Bohemia, to that time one of the most progressive countries in Europe, had 24,000 of its 36,000 villages destroyed and two-thirds of its population killed. One of the best estimates is that of the 16,000,000 people in the German empire about 10,000,000 were killed. And the type of character of the new crusaders was just the same as when their predecessors trampled on the Albigensians in 1211 or sacked Rome in 1527. In some places the unburied dead rotted in heaps for a year. In 1631 Tilly, a strictly Roman Catholic pupil of the Jesuits, took Magdeburg, which had long held out against him, and let his troops loose on the civilians. The women were raped (even in the churches), the men killed, the children tossed into the flames of their homes. Some of the Roman Catholic officers protested to Tilly. "The soldier must have some reward for his risk and labor," he said. Less than 4,000 of the 30,000 men, women, and children in the city survived the horror. The land was desolate, and German women prostituted themselves in crowds to get food for themselves and their children. A Roman Catholic writer tells of 13,000 women with a camp for 34,000 Roman Catholic soldiers. There was a lot even of cannibalism. Some of our new historians can spare pages for the pious practices (mostly fiction) of Francis of Assisi or the spiritual exercises of the Jesuits but have no space for these things which bear witness to the character of millions even 300 years ago.

XLII
The Massacre of St. Bartholomew

France, as I said, did not take part in the Thirty Years' War, in spite of all the pressure applied by the pope; but it sank to the same level of savagery in its attempt to get rid of the Protestants, and the Jesuits were here also implicated. This was especially seen in a great and cowardly massacre which was plotted in the royal palace for the feast of St. Bartholomew, August 24, 1572. Calvin, a Frenchman (proper name Cauvin), claimed that he had 500,000 Protestants (or Huguenots) in France, including some members of the royal family and nearly half the nobles, before he was driven to Switzerland. They were able to check the royal armies in the field and win toleration from the king, and this uneasy peace and mutual toleration were to be sealed by the marriage in Paris of the queen-mother's daughter to the Huguenot prince of Navarre. The leading Huguenots flocked to Paris, and, at about five o'clock in the morning of the feast of St. Bartholomew, the Roman Catholic nobles, the soldiers, and the rabble of Paris, dragged them from their beds and murdered several thousand of them. The fiery cross announcing so glorious a victory for the faith was sent through the provinces, and the estimate generally accepted is that about 50,000 Huguenots were murdered in the course of little over a month.

The features of this massacre are so barbarous that you would say that it could not possibly be ignored by any historian who regards history as primarily a record of the development of European character and culture, especially as Roman Catholic writers lie freely about it. They represent it as a spontaneous explosion of the honest ignorant workers of Paris — at four o'clock in the morning! — against these horrible heretics who not only threatened to rob them of their precious faith but were conspiring to murder their beloved queen (a morbid and arrogant bitch of the degenerate Medici family of Florence) and the young king; and they falsely quote Ranke and other non-Roman Catholic historians as saying that the victims numbered only 20,000; as if reducing by one-half the number of dead in this appalling slaughter relieved the church of blame. As to the plea that it was just an innocent popular outburst against heretics, it is almost enough to point out that the latest (Roman Catholic-influenced) editions of both of our ency-

clopedias, the *Americana* and the *Britannica*, admit that it was organized in the palace. The evidence is decisive. The queen pleaded to foreign powers, who (except Spain and Italy) were horrified, that it had merely foiled a Huguenot plot of massacre; and I have shown in my *Candid History of The Jesuits* that it was they who told the miserable woman that they had discovered such a plot on the part of the Huguenots.

It is, as I said, the barbarism of the outrage that chiefly invites the attention of the modern historian. Remember that the Middle Ages were now (1572) over according to our historians. Modern Times had begun, and the Roman Catholic Reformation was full on. The Huguenot leader, Admiral de Goligny, was lying in bed severely wounded, for there had already been an attempt to murder him, when, at midnight, nobles from the palace and soldiers entered the palace where he lay, murdered him, and flung his body out of the window; the mob, finding it on the street a few hours later, tied a string on it and dragged it through the gutter. After this, Catherine de Medici seems to have wavered, but at four o'clock in the morning the church bells rang out, and Roman Catholic nobles and soldiers and civil guards led the people to the attack. Thirty or forty leading Huguenot guests were lodged at the royal palace. Even these were dragged out, murdered, and mutilated. Witnesses tell us that the bloated queen and her court "ladies" laughed and joked over the nude corpses of Huguenots who had been honored guests the day before. Bodies were mutilated in a revolting manner and children dragged them along the street. Roman Catholic children stabbed Huguenot children. The whole of Paris was on the streets before seven, and there was an orgy of brutality. It is clear that many of the men, even officers, were disgusted, but they were exceptions. One witness tells us of a goldsmith who boasted, no doubt mendaciously, that he had murdered 400 Huguenots with his own hand. For years the clergy and the Roman Catholic leaders had poisoned the people as they now poison them against radicals.

As is well known, the queen at once sent word to Rome, and the pope had a special service of thanksgiving in St. Peter's. Roman Catholics say that he was at first misinformed and thought that the Huguenots were the aggressors. These writers do not tell that Pope Gregory XIII not only at once ordered a thanksgiving service but had a gold medal designed and struck, and a painting of the event executed by one of the chief artists. The motto on the medal was "Slaughter (*stragges*) of the Huguenots," which the *Catholic Encyclopedia* politely translates "*Overthrow* of the Huguenots," to keep up the fiction that 2,000 Hugue-

nots had attacked the palace, the army, and all the city. Long before his medal and painting were ready, Pope Gregory XIII knew the whole story; and there is ground to suspect that the plot had been discussed some time before between his representatives, the queen, and the fanatical Roman Catholic nobles.

Both on account of the revelation of character and in view of the distorting of the facts by Roman Catholic writers, one would expect modern historians to pay special attention to the gravest of all the events which occurred on the threshold of modern times. Ranke, who has written at length on the massacre, estimates that about 50,000 were killed in forty days. That is more than twice the number of men and women killed during the six months of the Terror in France in revolutionary days, and certainly fifty times greater than the number of Christians executed or massacred by the ancient Romans during 250 years.

Yet most of the new historians either make no mention of the massacre or just record the fact in a line (Professors Langer, Barnes, Geise, Wallbank and Taylor, Sheppard and Godfrey). Not a single one gives more than a few lines to it, discusses its significance, or tries to distribute the guilt. Professor Perkins puts the number of victims at 80,000, but dismisses it in a short paragraph. One of our historians remarks that, after all, it is no worse than the massacres perpetrated by some of our dictators. I suppose he refers to Hitler, and if Roman Catholics are content to learn that the chief city of their co-religionists in 1572, just after the popes had purified the church, behaved no worse than a homicidal maniac and sadist during six years of bitter war, who are we to resent the comparison?

* * * * *

I reach the opening of Modern Times, as history is usually divided by historians, just when the limitations of my space in this book compel me to halt. As I said in the introduction, as soon as I discovered that, even when confining myself to important points — one must not suppose, of course, that the matters discussed in this work are the only points on which these new manuals of history are open to criticism — I could not extend my inquiry beyond the end of the Middle Ages. Haldeman-Julius at once requested an extension of the work. Stages in the development of Modern Times of the greatest importance are treated in the new history in a manner that calls for criticism as urgently as any stage of the earlier development. We have just reached the age of Galileo and the

recovery of science, and we can guess how the new historians will deal with it. We want to see if they correctly explain the remarkable contrast in development between Roman Catholic and Protestant countries after the Iron Curtain was raised between them; how Italy fared after the "Roman Catholic Reformation"; why Spain and Portugal were smitten with paralysis and what the Inquisition did for them; how far or how little France remained Roman Catholic yet was able to inaugurate the Age of Reason. Then there are the new age of political development initiated by the American and French Revolution, the new alliance of the papacy with reaction in the bloody struggles of the last century and the preparation for a deeper struggle as the economic conflict opens. How does the new history put all these things before the public? And by request of Haldeman-Julius I will here combine an examination of the recent new edition of the *Columbia Encyclopedia* with the completion of my examination of the score of manuals of general or European history which fills this book.

It may assist the reader if I make one or two general reflections on my enquiry into their presentment of ancient and medieval history. It is understood, and I need not repeat, that they give a mass of information about political, economic, and social developments which does not concern me here. They give also a mass of detail about kings and queens, battles and alliances and ruptures, bloody invasions and migrations, etc., which hardly interest anyone except an educational pedant. The face of the new history seemed painfully familiar on most pages. What interests us moderns in ancient history is to see how at times the race in some favorable environment takes a step forward in our modern direction and to examine carefully what agencies caused or helped to advance and what agencies hindered it and brought about the invariable reaction.

In this respect I have suggested that the new history is as bad as or worse than the old. It hardly notices that in the fourth and third centuries B.C. there was a remarkable advance, after a century or two of new ideas and reaction, in the direction of modern science and social idealism, which I take to be the two most precious elements in our modern thought. From Athens, and presently Rome and Alexandria, to China the race was sloughing off the skin of the old prejudices, superstitions, and injustices. For the western world we recognize this in the Ionic-Epicurean group of scientific and ethical ideas which bore splendid fruit in the science of Alexandria and the social idealism of the Roman empire. Hardly one of our new historians even perceives this and none do justice to it. It is all lost in the old labyrinth of conventional

Greek and Roman history. While they make a great point of their discovery that the Renaissance, for instance, was no abrupt and unique appearance in history but was continuous with the preceding two or three centuries, which no serious historian ever questioned, they treat the history of the second and first centuries B.C. so scurvily that they seem to be particularly sparing the reader who believes that the appearance of Christianity was an abrupt, unique, and altogether novel phenomenon.

From the time when the Roman church first appears the most conspicuous element of newness in the new history is the almost complete suppression of the facts which rebuke the pretensions of the church and the appearance of sympathetic lives of saints and popes and accounts of theological beliefs and institutions which look incongruous in manuals of profane history. From the fourth century to the nineteenth there is a persistent refusal to reproduce the contemporary evidence as to general character, while Roman Catholic statements about it which have been repeatedly refuted are reproduced as accepted history. The Dark Age, the unique and most discrediting feature of European history, is denied, often with insulting language about the historians of the last century, partly on the strength of the false statement in nearly every one of these historians that it was supposed to stretch to the thirteenth, fourteenth, or even fifteenth century, and partly by the equally false statement that the historians of the last century represented the period as *uniformly* dark, while the true continuity of civilization through the Ostrogoths, the Lombards, and the fine Arab civilization in Spain and Sicily is either completely ignored or not adequately described. There is the same fallacious pretence of giving new conceptions of the Renaissance and Reformation. The massive and undisputed evidence of real character in the Middle Ages is ignored, and the phantom old historians whom they profess to correct are never quoted. In fact, at the one point at which we find three of the older and so very wrong historians ever named (in relation to the Renaissance) I showed from their very own words that the statement of their views is false.

I leave it to Americans to discuss how it is that this new history coincides remarkably with the Roman Catholic mendacious version of European history. It is new in a very limited sense. It certainly differs from the fine historical work of the last century, but instead of going forward, as science does, it goes backward, toward the Middle Ages. I am concerned only that it gives so comprehensively false a version of the evolution of the vital elements of civilization that one is tempted to call it a prostitution of the science of history.

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(as recorded in documents of incorporation)

AMERICAN ATHEISTS ARE ORGANIZED:

(1) to stimulate and promote freedom of thought and inquiry concerning religious beliefs, creeds, dogmas, tenets, rituals, and practices;

(2) to collect and disseminate information, data, and literature on all religions and promote a more thorough understanding of them, their origins, and their histories;

(3) to advocate, labor for, and promote in all lawful ways the complete and absolute separation of state and church;

(4) to advocate, labor for, and promote in all lawful ways the establishment and maintenance of a thoroughly secular system of education available to all;

(5) to encourage the development and public acceptance of a humane ethical system, stressing the mutual sympathy, understanding, and interdependence of all people and the corresponding responsibility of each individual in relation to society;

(6) to develop and propagate a social philosophy in which man is the central figure, who alone must be the source of strength, progress, and ideals for the well-being and happiness of humanity;

(7) to promote the study of the arts and sciences and of all problems affecting the maintenance, perpetuation, and enrichment of human (and other) life; and

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American Atheism may be defined as the mental attitude that unreservedly accepts the supremacy of reason and aims at establishing a life-style and ethical outlook verifiable by experience and the scientific method, independent of all arbitrary assumptions of authority or creeds.

Materialism declares that the cosmos is devoid of immanent conscious purpose; that it is governed by its own inherent, immutable, and impersonal laws; that there is no supernatural interference in human life; that man—finding his resources within himself—can and must create his own destiny. Materialism restores to man his dignity and his intellectual integrity. It teaches that we must prize our life on earth and strive always to improve it. It holds that man is capable of creating a social system based on reason and justice. Materialism's "faith" is in man and man's ability to transform the world culture by his own efforts. This is a commitment which is in every essence life-asserting. It considers the struggle for progress as a moral obligation and impossible without noble ideas that inspire man to struggle and produce bold creative works. Materialism holds that humankind's potential for good and for an outreach to more fulfilling cultural development is, for all practical purposes. unlimited.

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